

SOME
DOCTRINES
IN THE
Superlapsarian SCHEME

Impartially Examined by
The WORD of GOD.



L O N D O N,

Printed by J. WILSON, in *Gracechurch-street* :
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DOCTRINES

IN THE

Scriptures

THE NEW TESTAMENT



Printed by J. W. ...

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T H E
Superlapfarian S C H E M E
Impartially try'd by the
S C R I P T U R E.



T is beyond all Dispute, that the Doctrines of the Christian Religion are truly supported by the Holy Scripture, as it is the only certain Rule we have to know the Mind and Will of the infallible Founder of it; consequently, all Opinions and Maxims, that correspond not with this divine Rule, we should either entirely reject, or at least refuse to admit as Articles of our Faith: the Opinions of Men being so exceeding precarious, that they often stand diametrically opposite to the Will of God. Therefore if we leave the written Word, which the all-wise Rector of the Church hath given us, to lead our Minds into the Knowledge of his Will, no wonder if we stumble upon the dark Mountains of Error and Ignorance, by pursuing the chimerical Fancies of our own weak Apprehensions, which are as deceitful as an *Ignis Fatuus*. It therefore concerns

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all Christians sincerely and strictly to adhere unto that divine Rule which God hath given us ; and not suffer ourselves to run after the Opinions of Men, let their supposed fine Schemes appear never so amiable, by their seeming Agreeableness to our first received Principles, or present admired Notions : For unless we leave all supposed Lights, to follow the sure *Light* of God's Word, it will be little less than a Miracle, if we are not carried away with Shadows and empty Sounds ; and please ourselves with mere airy Speculations, while at the same time we vainly imagine, that these are agreeable to the Mind of the omniscient Being, and stoutly maintain them as such, when they are nothing better than the Product of weak and deceitful Fancies, contrived by fallible Men.

WHAT the infinitely wise *Jehovah* has revealed in his Word of infallible Truth, is our Duty to search into, since it was given for our Instruction and Improvement : But even herein we ought to attend with the utmost Care, lest we should suffer our own Opinions to bias our Minds in the Enquiry, so as to oblige the sacred Records to stoop to our Judgments, rather than submit ourselves to be entirely guided by the Scripture of Truth. This I'm persuaded is the Reason of so many Errors among Christians ; their misapplying the written Word, rather than part with their admired Schemes of Divinity, which have nothing but the Contrivance and Inventions of Men to support them. It is too true, that Men of the greatest Abilities, and seeming Penetration, have grossly wrested the Scriptures, and have lost themselves and their Adherents, by a too curious Enquiry into deep and unrevealed Mysteries : Why then will Men please themselves in exercising their Talents about Things too high for them ? It cannot become us to be positive, where the Scripture is silent.

silent. So far as we follow the revealed Will of Heaven, we are secure ; but to launch out into unrevealed Deeps, is not commendable, and unsafe ; *Psalm cxxxi. 1.* For what Reason then should we suffer our curious Minds to be uneasy, unless we can reach into Secrets, which God, who is infinite in Wisdom, has thought meet to conceal from us ? and has been pleased to inform us, that secret Things do not belong to us, but to him alone. Therefore if we curiously pry into, and eagerly thirst after, unrevealed Things, no wonder if we put Darkness for Light, and call the vain Imaginations of our foolish Minds, the great and eternal Truths of God ; as it is to be feared many do, in this Day of abounding Errors.

BUT as it is my Business to try (according to the Title of my Treatise) the Doctrines of the *Supralapsarians* by the Holy Scripture, which we profess a sincere Veneration for, as the only certain Rule to apply to, for Decision in all Controversies, where Doctrines of Religion are debated ; I shall therefore begin with the Foundation Principle of these Christian Professors, which is their received Opinion of *God's chusing his People without considering them as fallen Creatures.*

Now since this Way of stating Election has run them into many false Opinions, and great Absurdities, as I purpose to shew hereafter ; so likewise this their Foundation Doctrine is, 1. Destitute of any Scripture Support. 2. It is repugnant to their own Opinion of God's eternal Fore-knowledge, according to which he made his eternal Choice. 3. It tends to lessen the infinite Grace of God in his eternal Act of Election. 4. This Way of stating Election does (in my Opinion) strike severely against the Justice of the Almighty, in his passing by the rest of Mankind, not included in this Decree.

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BUT first I am to shew, that this their Foundation Doctrine is destitute of Support from the Scripture. And indeed I have often wonder'd what Parts of sacred Writ can be produced to support the exceeding high Edifice, which these Divines have been long building ; and yet I am confident, that they ought to have a better Basis, to fix so lofty a Pile upon, than I could ever yet come to the Knowledge of. I have therefore been searching, and trying, as well as I could, to know the Language of the Divine Word concerning Election : For it is only upon this Foundation, that I dare presume to build any religious Doctrines or Maxims, (as considering what the Apostle *Paul* saith, concerning such that will venture to bring in another Gospel) lest I should attempt any thing that might alter the Texture of the Gospel of Christ Jesus.

I SHALL therefore mention, and in few Words comment upon those Scriptures, which I judge are only necessary to be considered in this Dispute ; and desire my Reader to lay aside all Prejudice, that he may impartially try, if those Texts do not evidently discover, that the eternal God in his Election, or Choice of his People, did look upon, or consider them therein as fallen Creatures.

I SHALL begin with that Text in *1 Pet. i. 2.* *Elect according to the Fore-knowledge of God the Father, through Sanctification of the Spirit unto Obedience, &c.* This Text I judge makes it evident to all impartial Readers, that the People whom God fore-knew, were look'd upon in his eternal Choice of them as fallen Creatures, since they were elected to Sanctification and Obedience ; because the Impurity of Man's Nature, and his Disobedience, are the dismal Effects of the Fall : and unless they were beheld in this depraved Estate,

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Estate, I cannot see how they could be esteemed either as unclean or disobedient.

Obj. BUT probably the Men of this Scheme will readily reply to this, That as they do not believe the elect People of God were considered as fallen Creatures in their being fore-ordain'd to Sanctification and Obedience; so what I have here wrote, they cannot but esteem a begging of the Question.

IN Answer to which, I shall desire them seriously to consider, how exceeding inconsistent their Opinion is to the Text; for what can be more absurd, than to suppose, that a Being of infinite Fore-knowledge, who declares the End from the Beginning, should, according to that Fore-knowledge, elect his People to the Cure, and yet not look upon them under the Disease? And I am greatly mistaken, if the *Superlapsarians* do not make use of the following Maxim as their settled Opinion, *viz. That we were not elected as holy, and obedient Beings, but to the End we might be such.* How surprising is it then to hear, and read their contrary Opinions, *viz. That the People of God's Choice were considered as a pure Mass, in the eternal Decree of Election?* For what can render Men more inconsistent with themselves, than to affirm, that we were not the Almighty's Choice, because we were holy? but that he did chuse us to be made holy, and ordained the Means to effect the End; and yet in that Choice beheld us free from all Defilements and Deformity. This is so flagrant a Contradiction, that I know not who can reconcile it.

I SHALL next consider what the Apostle Paul writes to the Saints at *Ephesus, Ch. i. 3, 4. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual Blessings in heavenly Places (or Things) in Christ: Accord-*
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ing as he hath chosen us in him, before the Foundation of the World, that we should be holy, and without Blame, before him in Love. We are informed by this Scripture, that the great End which the Almighty and All-wise God had in choosing the People whom he fore-knew, was, that they might be holy, and without Blame, before him; which supposes that they were viewed in their impure and culpable State, when the eternal Choice was made, and therefore under the Fall.

BUT since the *Superlapsarians* do suppose, that this Text includes their Opinion, because it speaks of being chosen in Christ before the Foundation of the World; what if I should read the Text in the following Method, as taking it to be the real Meaning of it, *viz. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual Blessings in heavenly Things in Christ: According as he hath chosen us to the Enjoyment of them in him, before the Foundation of the World, in order to effect our Sanctification, that we might stand before him in Love, or in the blessed Effects of his eternal Love to us, in decreeing to us, those special and spiritual Blessings, to meeten us for an eternal Enjoyment of himself in Glory.* Which Blessings were secured to his chosen People, as having fore-ordained them to be his Children in Time to come, as in the 5th Verse, *Having predestinated us unto the Adoption of Children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good Pleasure of his Will.* If what I have said above, is entirely rejected, yet I presume this Verse will give us a just Light into our being chosen in Christ, which is here said to be by Christ; and as all Scripture agrees hereto, I am persuaded, if the Men in this Scheme will but seriously consider what this Text informs us, they will find enough in it to answer all the Arguments which they can possibly

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possibly raise to support their Notion of the foregoing Verse.

I COULD offer various Arguments here to shew, that there is no such eternal Union as they are pleased to talk and write of; but as I have consider'd this under that Head which treats of their eternal Union, I shall refer the Reader to it. And so I shall proceed to what this same Apostle writes to the believing *Romans* in *Chap. viii. Verse 29.* *For whom he did fore-know, he did also pre-destinate to be conformed to the Image of his Son;* and not as conformed thereto. This Text does most evidently inform us, that the People whom God fore-knew were looked upon as fallen Creatures, and therefore in the common Lump or Mass of Mankind, with the sad Effects of their depraved State within them; yea, with the same Stubbornness, and Rebellion in their Wills, and Unconformity to the holy and blessed Image of Christ; and therefore not Objects of Complacency, but of the compassionate and benevolent Love of a merciful and gracious God. And I do not know any Text, when justly considered, that can produce any thing in Favour of their exceeding fond Opinion, of God's chusing his People, without considering them under the Fall. I am persuaded that they will not produce that Text in *Isa. xlviii. 10.* to confirm their Doctrine; *I have chosen thee in the Furnace of Affliction.*

2. THIS Doctrine of theirs is repugnant to their own Opinion of God's eternal Fore-knowledge, according to which he was pleased to make his Choice.

FOR the *Superlapsarians* do acknowledge, that the omniscient *Jehovah* did at one View see, and perfectly behold whatsoever would come to pass, throughout all Ages of Time; or, that he saw all Effects in their Causes, &c. Now do but justly weigh

weigh this Confession, and you will easily perceive, that they must consider the eternal Father in his Fore-knowledge, as viewing all the differing Scenes that the chosen Objects would pass through or under. And I must confess, that unless we consider the infinite Prescience, thus looking through, and comprehending all Creatures and Things in their different States and Circumstances, both they and I are but very poorly grounded in the Opinion of God's Fore-knowledge. And if we should treat the infinite Knowledge of the Almighty as deficient herein, it would tend vilely to depreciate this glorious Perfection of his. This infinite Prescience then viewed all Mankind in their lapsed and lost Estate; and to suppose that God's People were chosen, without a Regard hereto, is to suppose them to be chosen without this View, and therefore must confront both Scripture and their own Opinion.

3. THIS Doctrine of God's chusing his People, without considering them as fallen Creatures, does tend to lessen the infinite Grace and Mercy of God in their Election.

AND that, because the worse the State in which the chosen Objects were considered when the Choice was made, the more the Grace that saves them is magnified, and the greater Honour will redound to the gracious Deliverer. And this appears to be the Meaning of the Apostle *Paul*, in *Rom. ix. 23.* where he calls the Elect, *Vessels of Mercy*, which looks upon them under the Fall; for Mercy supposes Misery. And is it not a greater Manifestation of Grace and Mercy, to chuse a poor, worthless, lost, helpless and miserable Creature to Glory and Salvation, than one that was not viewed in this wretched and miserable Estate? The more worthless the Object, and the more miserable the Case we were in, the greater will

will the Mercy and Grace appear that appointed and effected our Recovery out of it.

4. THIS Way of their stating Election, does in my Opinion strike severely against the Justice of God, in passing by the rest of Mankind, not included in this Decree; for hereby they are rejected as Creatures only, and not as sinful Creatures: Then certainly this Way of reasoning fixes the Damnation of poor Souls upon God's Act of Preterition, if they are rejected as Creatures only, and not as Sinners. Herein I presume they must represent the Almighty as using absolute Sovereignty, without any Regard to Justice, at the Thoughts of which I am ready to tremble; for I never could yet look upon any of the Almighty's Acts of Sovereignty, without regarding him in all his Proceedings therein, as in a Way of sovereign Grace and Mercy, or sovereign Justice; *For shall not the Judge of all the Earth do right?* Gen. xviii. 25. But as this is a Theme which I was always cautious of meddling with, lest I should darken Counsel for Want of Knowledge, I shall therefore forbear to pursue it any farther; but hope, if need be, some able Pen will be excited to engage in it, which may manage so awful a Subject with much better Skill than I am able to do.

Now as this is their Foundation Doctrine, and the very Root from whence all those different Branches grow, which have made up a Set of Principles, that have no evident Footing in the Holy Scriptures; so I presume, that what is built upon this Doctrine, will appear to be supported only by mere Conjectures, and false Ways of reasoning: For, as revealed Things only belong to us, so I cannot but esteem it a too great Forwardness in poor, weak, and imperfect Men, to pry into the secret Counsels of Heaven, and to assert Things with the greatest Assurance, which are not

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included in the sacred Oracle of Scripture ; altho' I know no other certain Rule that the All-wise God has afforded us, to form our Principles in Religion by. It is upon this Foundation of theirs, that they have presumed to support many unscriptural and shocking Hypotheses and Maxims ; but I cannot imagine what hath prevailed with them to leave the plain Rule of Scripture, to run precipitately after the Secrets of the Almighty, since secret Things belong to God only. If we acknowledge the Scripture as our Rule in all Points of Faith, as well as of Practice, it must certainly become us strictly to adhere to it, and not oblige that pure Word to prove Opinions of our own forming.

I SHALL now proceed to examine some of those Doctrines which grow from this Root, as the natural Offspring of it, and appear with the same Complection.

I. *THEIR* Doctrine of eternal actual Justification. It is very plain, that the *Superlapsarians* have exceeded all the Bounds of Revelation, in their Enquiries after this Doctrine ; since they have not scrupled, both in their Preachings, Writings, and Conversations, most strenuously to maintain, that God's Elect were actually justified in Eternity : But how they arrived to this Knowledge is no small Mystery, since the Scripture is not their Informer in this exceeding nice Point ; for there is no Part of that sacred Volume, that mentions Justification before Faith. We read indeed of being justified by Faith, but no where before it. *Rom. v. 1. Therefore being justified by Faith, we have Peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.* So, *Gal. iii. 24. Wherefore the Law was our Schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by Faith.* The same Apostle is treating largely of Justification in the 4th Chap. to the

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the Romans, and in the 16th Verse, informs them, that they were justified by Faith, in the following Words, *Therefore it is of Faith, that it might be of Grace, to the end the Promise might be sure to all the Seed.* So Gal. ii. 16. *Knowing that a Man is not justified by the Works of the Law, but by the Faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the Faith of Christ.* All these Scriptures shew plainly, that we are justified by or through Faith, and therefore not before it, which the Apostle makes exceeding plain in Rom. viii. 30. *Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified, &c.* In this and the preceding Verse, the holy Apostle is laying down the Order or Chain of our Salvation, who begins at the Foundation, and rises to the Top-stone of the glorious Building; and very evidently sheweth, that our Calling is prior to our Justification; therefore either the *Superlapsarians* are wrong, or else the Apostle Paul, &c. is wrong: And whose Judgment must we follow, whether the inspired Writers of the infallible Scripture of Truth, or these Authors, that have no Part of that sacred Book to found their Opinion upon?

LET who will follow the Devices and Imaginations of Men, I desire to keep close to what is revealed in the written Word, as the Mind of God, and what is able to make me wise unto Salvation, through Faith in Christ Jesus, 2 Tim. iii. 15.

BUT since the Opinions of Men are advanced so high, as to judge of what was done, or supposed to be done, in Eternity; I shall endeavour to shew, that these Divines, by their admired, supposed Understanding (in what neither they, nor any Man on Earth can know) have, to favour their

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Scheme, opposed plain Texts of Scripture, and positive Injunctions to Practice.

1. BY their denying that the Lord Jesus came to reconcile God to his Elect People, and affirming that God was ever reconciled to them.

2. IN their refusing to pray for the Pardon of Sin, any otherwise than the Manifestation of Pardon.

3. BY their affirming that God loved his Elect People as well, and delighted as much in them, while in their Sins and Rebellion against him, as when converted and obedient Children.

4. BY their asserting that our Saviour was by Imputation a Sinner ; yea, that he became *very* Sin, &c.

BUT, 1. I shall shew, that their denying that Jesus Christ came into this World to reconcile God to poor Sinners, does oppose plain Texts of Scripture ; for notwithstanding they are pleased to affirm, *That God was eternally reconciled to the Elect, and that no Scripture can be produced, to prove that the Lord Jesus did come to procure Reconciliation for them ; and that wherever Christ is said to make Peace by his Blood, it is to be understood only of his reconciling the Sinner to God : yet I trust that it will be made appear, that whoever say thus, may be said not to know what they say, nor whereof they affirm, since their Notion is opposite*

(1.) TO what was shadowed forth to us, or rather to the *Jews*, by all those Offerings under the Law, which were called Sin-Offerings and Peace-Offerings.

(2.) IT is opposite to what is plainly prophesied of Christ in the Old Testament, and what is affirmed of his Performances in the New Testament.

(3.) THIS their Doctrine tends not only to lessen, but to frustrate the great and important Ends of our Saviour's Death.

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(4.) IT destroys and renders the Offices of Christ, as Mediator and Intercessor, ineffectual, yea, needless.

BUT, (1.) This Doctrine is directly opposite to what was shadowed forth by all those Sacrifices under the Law, which are called Sin-Offerings and Peace-Offerings. For if the Lord Jesus did not come to be the great atoning Sacrifice, then were all those Sacrifices that were offered by God's Appointment without Signification, and could have no View to Christ as their great Antitype. For altho' the *Superlapsarians* do call those Offerings under the Law Typical Sacrifices, yet their Words and their Meaning must be vastly different, if the great Antitype was not our Peace-maker.

BUT that all Readers may be capable to judge in this Affair, I shall here transcribe some of those Texts that mention those legal Sacrifices, and the Design of them; *Lev. viii. 14, 15. And he (viz. Moses) brought the Bullocks for the Sin-Offering: And Aaron and his Sons laid their Hands upon the Head of the Bullock for the Sin-Offering, and he slew it; and Moses took the Blood, and put it upon the Horns of the Altar round about with his Finger, and purified the Altar, and poured the Blood at the Bottom of the Altar, and sanctified it, to make Reconciliation upon it. 2 Chron. xxix. 21-24. And they brought seven Bullocks, and seven Rams, and seven Lambs, and seven He-goats, for a Sin-Offering for the Kingdom, and for the Sanctuary, and for Judah; and he commanded the Priests, the Sons of Aaron, to offer them on the Altar of the Lord: So they killed the Bullocks, and the Priests received the Blood, and sprinkled it on the Altar. Likewise when they had killed the Rams they sprinkled the Blood upon the Altar: And they brought forth the He-Goats for the Sin-Offering, before the King and the Congregation, and they laid*

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laid their Hands upon them; and the Priests killed them, and they made Reconciliation with their Blood upon the Altar, to make Atonement for all Israel. Ezek. xlv. 17. And it shall be the Prince's Part to give Burnt-Offerings, and Meat-Offerings, and Drink-Offerings, in the Feasts, and in the new Moons, and in the Sabbaths, in all Solemnities of the House of Israel: He shall prepare the Sin-Offering, and the Meat-Offering, and the Burnt-Offering, and the Peace-Offering, to make Reconciliation for the House of Israel.

W H A T can all these Scriptures intend, if we must not behold God as offended with his People for their Transgressions, and that Atonement must be made by a sufficient Sacrifice? But probably the Gentlemen of this Scheme will be displeased with me, for supposing that God should be offended at his People for their Sins: But if the Scripture informs us that Sin is an Offence (as it plainly does in *Rom. v. 15.*) then must the Sinner be an Offender, whether he be elected or no; and that God, against whom the Sin is committed, must be offended, (*Isa. lix. 1, 2.*) But here they object, and tell us, *That though God is offended with his People's Transgressions, yet that he never was, nor never will be offended with them.* O most absurd Distinction! What Shifts will Men not attempt, in order to maintain a received fond Opinion, tho' ridiculous enough! I desire they would inform us, for what Intent we have it so often repeated in the above-mentioned Texts, of the Old Testament Saints making Reconciliation and Atonement by their Sacrifices; who was it that was to be atoned or reconciled? was it not God? Yes surely, or else it must not be read of making Atonement for all *Israel*, and making Reconciliation for the *House of Israel*; but rather, to make Atonement to all *Israel*, and to make Reconciliation to the *House*
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of *Israel*; or else, for the God of *Israel*, which would suit their Opinion much better. But since it is past all Dispute, that the Party to be reconciled is God, I would enquire who, or what was he to be reconciled to? was it not the Sinner? If you say, Yes, your Cause is in Danger of being lost; for your Answer will overthrow your Doctrine. And if you answer, No; then I reply, that it must be either with the Sinner, or the Sin: But with the Sin it cannot be, for Heaven and Hell will as soon meet, as that the infinitely holy and righteous God can be reconciled to Sin: No, that is the abominable Thing which his Nature hates; and it is impossible that a Being of infinite Holiness can be reconciled to the Offspring and Image of the Devil.

(2.) I AM now to shew, that this Doctrine, which denies that our Saviour came to reconcile God to poor Sinners, does evidently oppose both what is prophesied of Christ in the Old Testament, and what is affirmed of its Ends and Performances in the New Testament.

1. IT confronts what was prophesied of Christ in the Old Testament. *Isa. liii. 10.* there we read, that *his Soul was to be made an Offering for Sin*. I know not what Sense any Man can put upon these Words to favour the *Superlapsarians* Opinion, that the Lord Jesus did not come to reconcile God to us, but to reconcile us to God only; for who can imagine, that Jesus Christ should make himself an Offering to appease the Offender? This is in no respect consistent either with Scripture or Reason; for the Apostle *Paul* plainly sheweth us, that Christ *was made an Offering to God for us of a sweet-smelling Savour*, *Ephes. v. 2. i. e.* a Peace-Offering, by which our Pardon and Acceptance with God is procured, since *he died for our Sins according to the Scriptures*, *1 Cor. xv. 3.*
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or, agreeable to the Prophecies of the Old Testament, *Isa. liii. 8. For the Transgressions of my People was he stricken.* It was to satisfy divine Justice for our Sins, and thereby make Reconciliation with God for us, that he suffered all the dismal Tortures of the Cross, &c. which well agrees with what the Angel *Gabriel* told to the Prophet *Daniel*, in *Chap. ix. 24. Seventy Weeks are determined upon thy People, and upon thy holy City, to finish the Transgression, and to make an End of Sins, and to make Reconciliation for Iniquity, and to bring in everlasting Righteousness.* That this is a Prophecy of Christ, and a fixing the Time of his Crucifixion, is not (that I know of) denied by any Christian Expositor, and therefore I shall take it for granted, that the *Superlapsarians* do agree herewith. And then we may plainly see, that what was foretold of our Saviour by the Prophets, does exactly answer to the End of all the Typical Sacrifices of Sin-Offerings and Peace-Offerings, which were frequently offered under that darker Dispensation of the Law, to make Reconciliation and Atonement for Sin, *i. e.* to point out the Death and sufferings of our dear Redeemer Christ Jesus, as the great, yea, the only satisfactory Sacrifice.

2. I SHALL now proceed to shew, that this Doctrine of the *Superlapsarians* does oppose what is affirmed of our Lord's Performance in the New Testament ; for in that sacred Part of our Bible we are informed, that Christ hath *made Peace by the Blood of his Cross ; Col. i. 20. That he died for our Sins according to the Scripture ; 1 Cor. xv. 3. That Christ gave himself for us an Offering and a Sacrifice to God of a sweet-smelling Savour ; Ephes. v. 2. That he was made like unto his Brethren, (or took upon him the human Nature) that he might make Reconciliation for the Sins of the People,*

People, *Heb. ii. 17.* Have we then Peace by the Blood of Jesus, and Pardon through his Blood? *Ephes. i. 7. Col. i. 14.* And did he become like unto his Brethren, in assuming our Nature, that he might make Reconciliation for the Sins of the People; and yet was God as truly reconciled to us from Eternity? I admire how any Men professing Godliness, dare venture to assert this, which so directly opposeth plain Scripture, not only what is above cited, but also what is written in *Rom. v. 1. Therefore being justified by Faith, we have Peace in God through our Lord Jesus Christ.* This Text does (to my Apprehension) evidently prove, that God is not at Peace with us till we are Believers. And if the *Superlapsarians* do imagine, that this Scripture includes their Scheme of Reconciliation, I am persuaded that they will find it a very difficult Task to make it speak their Language; for notwithstanding they have been long tampering with it, yet they have not been able to effect their Design, and I am confident they never will be able to do it, whatever they may think to the contrary. For if we should admit for a Tryal, to remove the Stop in the Text, to the Word where they would have it fixed, tho' I presume there is no Reason for it, because the Apostle is treating of Justification by Faith in the very next Verse but one to the Text, by shewing that Righteousness shall be imputed to us, as well as unto *Abraham*, if we believe on him that raised up our Lord Jesus from the dead; and in the following Words, which is the very next Verse to the Text in Dispute, he informs us, that Christ *was delivered* (*i. e.* probably to Death and the Grave) for our Offences, and raised again for our Justification; so that the Stop seems very justly fixed as it is in our Bible: Yet I say, if for Argument sake we should allow the Comma directly after the Word

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justified, how is it possible that it should answer their End? For the Word Faith will still remain an immoveable Rock in their Way, unless they can alter the subsequent Part of the Text too, which you will easily perceive by reading the Words with the Stop placed according to the Desire of these Gentlemen, as follows, *Therefore being justified, by Faith we have Peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.* I must now desire these Divines to explain to me how the subsequent Part of this Text (as by their Direction it is now pointed) can be construed to speak in Favour of their Doctrine of eternal Reconciliation; since this Method of reading the Words is I think as plain for Reconciliation through Faith, as it is with the Stop in its proper Place. Therefore if they cannot prove that Faith has nothing to do with the Peace mentioned in the Text, I shall presume to say, that this Scripture will still militate against their Doctrine of Reconciliation, yea, and their eternal Justification too; for there cannot be a Justification, where there is not an actual Reconciliation: This they are not ignorant of, which is the Reason why they they have taken so much Pains to instil the Notion of eternal Reconciliation into the Minds of the People, as well knowing that one of these Doctrines cannot stand without the other. But probably I may be accosted by another Argument, in admitting the Alteration of the Comma, and the Advocates for eternal Reconciliation will urge it against me, that the Peace mentioned in the Text may, without any Difficulty, be construed to intend our being reconciled to God by Faith, and not that God is at Peace with us hereby. But I conceive, that they have a great Difficulty yet to remove, and that they must still alter the reading of the Words, and the very Texture of them too, before it can speak their
Opinion,

Opinion, by reading them thus ; *By Faith we are at Peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ ;* and not, that *by Faith we have Peace with God, &c.* For the Words as they yet stand, do most evidently prove, that God, who is infinitely holy and righteous, is not at Peace with us until we believe, (which supposes Repentance too) as I judge he could not in Honour to his Holiness be, until we believe in his Name, and in his Son's Name, Merits, and Righteousness, cease our Rebellion, acknowledge our Guilt, and humbly seek to the God of Mercy for pardoning Grace, through the Merits and Mediation of our dear and merciful Saviour, by whom alone we have Access to God, and into his divine Grace or Favour, wherein his People do stand, *Rom. v. 2.*

(3.) I AM now to prove, that this Doctrine of theirs not only lessens, but tends to frustrate, the great and important Ends of our Saviour's Sufferings and Death. It is to me no small wonder, that the Men of this Scheme should be so ignorant of the evil Consequences of their Doctrines, when one would think, that Men with no more than a common Share of Reason might easily perceive, that some Part of their Doctrines oppose other Parts of them ; And in particular I wonder, that they cannot see how flagrantly their fond Opinions of eternal Reconciliation and Justification clash against the Satisfaction of Christ. For, if God was eternally reconciled, he was eternally satisfied ; but how was the Satisfaction obtained, if not by the Death and Sufferings of the Lord Jesus ? For if it was made any other Way, I am at a Loss to know it, since the Apostle informs us, that *without shedding of Blood, there is no Remission*, Heb. ix. 22. And if there could be no Remission, or Pardon of Sin, without the shedding of Christ's precious Blood, then 'tis evident, that

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there could be no Reconciliation to us without it ; for if there was, I desire to know, what were the great Ends of our Saviour's coming into this World, clothed with Flesh ? Why did he make so lowly an Appearance, as to come in the Form of a Servant, who was Lord of all Worlds ? Why was he made under the Law, and consented to a most strict Conformity thereunto, that the righteous Demands thereof might be fulfilled by one in our Nature ? Why did he suffer all the Shame, Contempt and Reproach, that vile and blasphemous Tongues could load him with, even to the breaking of his tender Heart ? Why did he suffer those grievous Agonies of Soul when in the Garden, where he cries out, through the exceeding Pressure of his Spirit, *My Soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto Death* ; and on the Cross, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me* ? Why did he undergo all the exquisite Tortures of the Cross, in all Parts of his blessed Body ? O ! surely it was for no less Ends, than to satisfy Divine Justice for our many and great Offences, and to procure our eternal Happiness, that this blessed and holy Person underwent and endured all this for us.

BUT if this Branch of the *Superlapsarian Scheme* is to be understood according to their own Way of wording it, (*viz. That Christ Jesus did not come to reconcile God to his Elect, because he was never unreconciled to them, but always well pleased with them ; but that he came only to reconcile the Elect to God*) then the Consequence of this Doctrine is, that Christ came to be an Offering to the Sinner, and not to God for us ; and his making Reconciliation for the Sins of the People, *Heb. ii. 17.* must be by his becoming an Offering of a sweet-smelling Saviour to the People, as being the Party offended. For it is inconsistent with all Scripture, and with all Reason, to say that the

Peace-

Peace-Offering was made to the Party, who was never offended, but was ever reconciled.

THE N also it will appear absolutely necessary for the Support of their Doctrine, that they make it plain to us, that the Lord Jesus did not come to satisfy Divine Justice, but to satisfy the Sinner only : For, as I observ'd before, if God was eternally reconciled, he was eternally satisfied ; and if so, we must never more talk of Satisfaction, and Peace by the Blood of Jesus, any otherwise than as he shed his Blood to satisfy and reconcile the Sinner ; and so most absurdly conclude, that our Lord Jesus became an Offering of Peace to the Criminal, and not for him. This I think is the natural Consequence of their Doctrine of Reconciliation ; and I am almost surprized, that they cannot perceive it, seeing it strikes directly against the great and comfortable Truth, of God's Justice receiving its compleat Satisfaction by the unspeakable Sufferings of the Lord Jesus Christ.

B U T farther, I cannot perceive that the reconciling a poor rebellious Sinner to God, is the Effect of Price, but of Power only. For the subduing a poor, proud, stubborn Sinner, and sweetly inclining the Soul to submit to the glorious Methods of divine Grace, is certainly the Effect of a divine Power, by enlightening the Understanding, softening the Heart, and regulating the sinful and irregular Affections ; and therefore rather to be attributed to the Efficacy of the eternal Spirit, (in making the Gospel, or any of the Means, subservient to produce this great and necessary Change) than to the Purchase of Christ's Blood. Now this is, in few Words, what I understand to be the reconciling of a Sinner to God. And, to speak with humble and the most profound Reverence, I would ask the *Superlapsarians*, What Reason they can assign, to prove that the eternal Son of God should condescend

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condescend so exceeding low, as to take our Nature into Union with his divine Nature, and appear in all the humble Forms of a Servant, and undergo such great, and Variety of Sorrows and Sufferings, as to suffer in his divine Character; yea, exquisite Tortures in his blessed Body, and inconceivable Agonies in his righteous Soul, and all this to bring about a Reconciliation of Sinners to God; which I humbly conceive to be no other, than what was ever necessary from *Adam's* first Sin, and was effected by the Almighty Power of divine Grace, upon all the Believers who lived under the various Dispensations of the Old Testament? I do therefore conclude, that the unspeakable Sufferings which our blessed Lord underwent, was to give Satisfaction to divine Justice, for the infinite Debt of Sufferings which was due to us for our great and numerous Sins, and thereby render the divine Majesty of Heaven propitious towards us, or make Reconciliation with him for us, *Heb. ii. 17.* who I judge would otherwise have been as a consuming Fire to all the sinful Race of Mankind.

(4.) I SHALL now endeavour to make it plain, that their Doctrine of eternal Reconciliation, renders the Offices of Christ, as Mediator, Intercessor and High Priest, needless, yea, of none Effect; as these Offices relate to the effecting a Reconciliation, either as a middle Person, or as engaged to make Satisfaction to the offended Party by a sufficient Sacrifice.

I. THE Office of a Mediator is only suitable to Christ, as he is a middle Person, concerned for both Parties; and although there is no Party-Quarrels among Men, that will in all Points be an exact Simile to this most important Affair, which the blessed Jesus has taken upon him to make up; yet we may learn something by this Office between

tween one Man and another. As the Man that sustains this Office, is, in all Points of Justice concerned in the Execution thereof, to see that neither Party is wronged, as being appointed to do Justice on both Sides; and it is necessary, that the Person concerned to adjust the Affair, be first allowed or agreed to by both Parties, before he enters upon the Execution of his Mediatorship, or can make Reconciliation. These Things I presume do appear to be necessary, in order to the Reconciliation I am treating of; in that there is no Reconciliation nor Justification, before Faith in Christ: This I trust will be made evident, before I close the Arguments against their Doctrine of eternal Justification. But to proceed, I desire to know upon what Foundation the Asserters of eternal Reconciliation can prove their Doctrine consistent with the Mediatorship of our Redeemer, since the Scripture so plainly informs us, (as well as the Customs among Men) that a Mediator is a middle Person between two offended Parties, as appears by 1 Tim. ii. 5. *For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and Men, the Man Christ Jesus.* And, Gal. iii. 20. *Now a Mediator is not a Mediator of one, (or one Party only) but God is one.* But if God was eternally reconciled, then the Office of a Mediator is needless; and it is plain that this Doctrine inevitably sets aside it as such, unless the greatest Inconsistencies in the World can be proved harmonious or agreeable Truths; for certainly it must be an impossible Task, to prove that there is a Necessity for this important Office, when there is no more than one Party to treat with. But if these Authors can trace this Office into Eternity, and prove that Christ Jesus was not only set up as Mediator from Everlasting, but that he compleated the whole of the Work, which belonged to this Office, in Eternity, (this may serve to

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to make it resemble some of their other Notions, as appearing consistent with their Doctrines of eternal actual Justification and Union, &c.) and that ever since the Covenant between the eternal Father and Son was settled, the Office of a Mediator ceased. But, alas! they have no Scripture to favour this, and therefore we must think ourselves obliged to believe, that this important Office is still necessary; or else we must cease to give credit to the sacred Scripture, as the revealed Will of God, which informs us, that our Saviour does now sustain the Offices of a Mediator and Intercessor; for it is spoke in the present Tense, in the fore-cited *1 Tim. ii. 5. For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and Men, the Man Christ Jesus.* And, in *Rom. viii. 34.* the same Apostle informs us, that Christ at the right Hand of God maketh Intercession for us. So likewise in his Epistle to the *Hebrews, Ch. vii. Verse 25.* we read, *That he (viz. Christ) ever lives to make Intercession for them that come to God by him.* But if God was eternally reconciled, the Apostle must be exceedingly mistaken; for where there is no Displeasure, there can be no need of an Intercessor or Mediator. We are therefore concerned to try who is the most likely to be mistaken, whether the Scriptures, or these modern Divines, whose Scheme so directly opposeth what is contained in sacred Writ: Whose Opinion then is safest to follow, *Paul's*, or *Mr. Hussy's*? Whether the sacred Records of the Scripture, or the Writings of *Dr. Crisp*, &c.

If these Expositors have endeavoured to explain that Text, *John iii. 16. (For God so loved the World, that he gave his only-begotten Son, &c.)* so as to suit their Notion of God's being ever reconciled to his Elect, and have thereby opposed various other Parts of sacred Scripture; it will certainly

tainly become us, rather to suspect the Truth of their Sentiments of the Text, than in the least to imagine that the Scripture, which was given by the eternal and infallible Spirit, can thwart and contradict itself. Therefore let God be true, though all Men are Lyars. And let us chuse always to credit the Writings of the holy Scriptures, before all Authors or Opinions in the World; for if they speak not according to this Rule, it is because there is no Light in them; *viz.* so far as any Men oppose the revealed Will of God, they walk in Darkness, and know not whither they are going.

2. ANOTHER Branch of their eternal Justification, is their refusing to pray for the Pardon of Sin, any otherwise than the Manifestation of it to their Consciences; this they found upon their Notion of being pardoned in Eternity, as included in their supposed eternal Justification. I shall therefore try this Practice by the Example of the holy Men of God, whose Prayers stand upon Record in Scripture; and also by the Advice and Direction of our blessed Lord and Saviour, to the Performance of this great and necessary Duty, as incumbent on all Men, whether converted or unconverted.

AND I judge that it will appear, that herein they go contrary to the brightest Examples, and plainest Injunctions of the divine Standard of Scripture, which is the only Rule to prove the Truth of our Practice, as well as our Doctrines by. But to shew how disagreeable to the Example of the greatest Saints (whose Prayers stand upon Record in Scripture) they walk herein, will appear from what Moses speaks in Prayer to God; *Exod. xxxiv. 9. And he said, if now I have found Grace in thy Sight, O Lord, let my Lord, I pray thee, go amongst us, and pardon our Iniquity and our Sin, and take us for thine Inheritance.* David likewise
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prays to God for the Pardon of his Sin ; *Psal.* xxv. 11. *For thy Name sake, O Lord, pardon my Iniquity, for it is great.* Solomon makes his Supplication to God, at the Dedication of the Temple, for the Pardon of Sins ; *1 Kings* viii. 30, 34, 39, 50. And thus prays good *Daniel*, in *Ch.* ix. 19. *O Lord hear, O Lord forgive, &c.* And thus prays our great and infallible Teacher Christ Jesus for his Murderers, with his dying Breath ; *Luke* xxiii. 34. saying, *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.* Certainly these great Examples must be sufficient to remove all Scruples in this great Affair, and fully satisfy every humble Soul, that it is our Duty to pray unto God to pardon our Iniquities ; and not for the Witness, or Manifestation of Pardon only. For I presume, that though this is to be done, yet the other must not be left undone ; nay, I have often wonder'd, how any humble sensible Christian, can refuse thus to pray to that God, against whom we have so greatly and often offended.

(2.) WE have not only the Examples above to walk by, but we have the Advice and Direction of our Lord and Saviour in this important Affair, which I judge should put it beyond all doubt, since he was sent to be the great Leader, as well as the Commander of his People, *Isa.* lv. 4. We read in *Luke* xi. 1. that one of the Disciples desires our Lord, that he would teach them to pray, and that our Saviour immediately answers the Request ; and in that Directory he adviseth them to pray for the Pardon of Sin ; *ver.* 4. *And forgive us our Sins, &c.* Now I cannot think that it appears with an humble Aspect, to refuse the Advice of our great Prophet in this Case ; for does it not look with an imperious View, when we dissent from the Rule which he hath given ? Are we better skilled in the Matter and Manner of addressing

Impartially tried by the Scripture. 27

dress the divine Majesty, than to learn of him who taught as never Man taught, and is styled the wonderful Counsellor? O! sure we should be exceeding careful, that we do not reflect any Dishonour upon the infallible Founder of our Religion, by disregarding his Rules, which we should esteem far beyond all the Wisdom and Contrivances of Men: For this is God's beloved Son, whose Advice we are enjoined to regard; *Luke ix. 35. And there came a Voice out of the Cloud, saying, this is my beloved Son, hear him.* This is that divine Prophet, of whom *Moses* did write, to whose Commands a strict Obedience is required, *Deut. xviii. 18, 19.* which Text is quoted by the Apostle *Peter*, in *Acts iii. 22, 23.* For *Moses* truly said unto the Fathers, a Prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you, of your Brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all Things, whatsoever he shall say unto you. And it shall come to pass, that every Soul which will not hear that Prophet, shall be destroyed from among the People. Therefore if he that speaks from Heaven, and always spoke the Mind of his eternal Father, is to be regarded and obeyed; it will then most assuredly turn to our unspeakable Disadvantage, if we refuse to hear him in this, as well as in all other spiritual Concerns.

I SHALL now consider what was said to an unconverted Man, *viz. Simon Magus*, who, when he had discovered the Deceit of his Heart, by offering to purchase the Gifts of the Holy Ghost with Money, by which it appeared that he was in the Gall of Bitterness, and in the Bond of Iniquity, *i. e.* in an unconverted Estate, or unreconciled to God, and a Slave to his Lust; which, when the Apostle perceived, he advises him to repent of his Wickedness, and pray that the evil Thought of his Heart might be forgiven him, *Acts viii. 21-23.* Who then can be so stiff against the divine Com-

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mand and Advice of Christ and this Apostle, as to neglect to pray for the Pardon of Sin? Is it possible, that this Counsel may be dispensed with, and yet that we are not disobedient to the Mind of God therein? I profess I am surpriz'd at the Conceit of those that dare set up their own invented Schemes, to militate against the plain Rule of God's Word. But if it should be objected, that praying for the Remission of Sin, confronts their Opinion of being pardoned in Eternity, I answer, that we may assure ourselves, if our Opinions will not suffer us to follow the pure Rule of Scripture, which is plainly laid down, that our Opinion in that Affair is wrong, and is unworthy to be espoused by any Christian; and therefore I judge it only remains which we will adhere to, whether the Opinions and Prescriptions of Men, or the Commands and Directions of God in his Word.

T H E third Branch of their eternal Justification, is, That God loved and delighted in the Elect, as much while in their sinful Estate, and in the Height of their Rebellion against his Laws, as when they are converted, and made obedient to his Ways.

I S H A L L not scruple to say, that this is a very licentious Way of talking, and that my Mind hath been greatly afflicted, when I have heard or read this spurious and disagreeable Tenet of theirs, which is built upon the false and sandy Foundation of their supposed eternal Union with Christ, which, in its proper Place, I trust will be made to appear to be the mere Invention of their vain Imagination, owing to their eager Desire after unrevealed Mysteries. And no wonder, when we vehemently thirst after the Knowledge of Secrets not necessary to be known by us, if our vain Mind is suffered to wander

der into some perplexing Paths of Deceit, while we please ourselves with the vain Thoughts that we are most surely in the Track that the eternal Spirit leads the Just.

BUT sure we ought to take the utmost Care, lest we should father that upon the Leadings of the holy Spirit, which God will never own for Truth; and it is greatly to be feared, that many Doctrines which reflect dishonour upon the Christian Religion, yea, and palpably strike against the Doctrine of God's Holiness, have been represented by the Authors of it, as coming from the pure Fountain of Light; by which means the most odious and inconsistent Opinions of deceived Men, have been received with the greatest Applause, as if none were equal to them. And I am of Opinion, that this common Maxim of the *Superlapsarians* will appear to be one of that Sort, which strikes against the pure Doctrines of Christianity; and that it reflects great Dishonour upon the adorable Attribute of God's Holiness, by saying, That the infinitely holy God takes Delight in some of the Children of Men, while in their unconverted State, and rebelling against him. What do these Authors mean, by asserting or vindicating so shocking a Maxim as this is? Is this the Way to advance the glorious Doctrine of God's rich and free Grace, by striking at his Holiness? Is this the Way to give poor Sinners a Dislike to Sin, and shew them the disagreeable and odious Nature of it? Does this Doctrine discover unto the Children of Men, that the Holy One of *Israel* abhors the Works of Iniquity, yea, the Workers of it; *Psal. v. 5.* No, it does not, it cannot do it, but contradicts it. Can this give poor Souls any agreeable Opinion of God's Holiness, to tell them, that if they are elected, he takes as great Pleasure and Delight in them, while wallowing in their Filthiness, and

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and maintaining their Rebellion against him, as he does when they are reduced to Obedience, humbling themselves before him, and lifting up their Hearts to him in Prayer? O how contrary is this Doctrine to the Language of the holy Scripture! by which we are informed what Pleasure the Lord takes in the humble and repenting Soul, *viz.* that he is pleased to dwell with them as his Delight; *Isa. lvii. 15.* and that he delights in their Voice of Prayer; *Prov. xv. 8. The Prayer of the Upright is his Delight, &c.* But it no where informs us, that God takes Pleasure in the Persons of the Wicked, nor in their Service; for while it comes from a filthy and rebellious Heart, the Holy God abhorreth both them and their Sacrifice; *Psal. v. 5. Thou (i. e. God) hatest all the Workers of Iniquity. Prov. xv. 8. The Sacrifice of the Wicked is an Abomination to the Lord, &c. Eccles. v. 4. When thou vowest a Vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for he taketh no Pleasure in Fools. Prov. xi. 20. They that are of a froward Heart, are an Abomination to the Lord, but the Upright are his Delight.* Now I trust, that the *Superlapsarians* will allow, that all unconverted Sinners are Fools in the Sense of the Scripture, as having no Regard to the Honour of God, nor to the Welfare of their precious and immortal Souls; and that all such poor ignorant Souls, whether elect or not elected, are froward of Heart, as the carnal Mind is not subject to the Law of God, *Rom. viii. 7.* and that such cannot please God, *ver. 8.* If this is allowed, then their Notion, that God was reconciled to them, and took the fullest Complacency in them, while disobedient and foolish, must necessarily fall before the Light of God's Word in these Texts, as agreeable to their own Sense of the Words. But farther, this novel Hypothesis stands diametrically opposite to all practical Godliness, as well
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as to revealed and natural Religion, by suggesting, that the holy and righteous God takes an equal Delight in some of the Children of Men, when they are lifting up the Heel against him, by kicking against the Bowels of his Mercy, rejecting and trampling upon his Grace, as when most sincerely and devoutly worshipping before him. It must be exceeding strange indeed, that the great and holy God should esteem himself glorified, when his People bring forth much Fruit, *i. e.* good Fruit; and yet take as great Delight in them, when they dishonour him, by violating his Laws, and rejecting his Word. How is it possible to reconcile this, either to the holy Scripture, or to our own Experience? Nay, what can be offer'd more directly repugnant to the Word of God, whereby to represent him as false to what he hath said, in *1 Sam. ii. 30.* *For they that honour me, I will honour; and they that despise me, shall be lightly esteemed?* And in *Isa. lix. 1, 2.* we are informed, that God hid his Face from his People, and refused to hear their Prayers, because of their Sins and Iniquities, which had made a Separation between him and them. And are we not taught by the Light of Experience, that altho' we may love our Enemies, so as to pity and pray for them, and do Good unto them; yet we cannot delight in them, when we see them daily contriving our Hurt, and running counter to the holy and righteous Law of Heaven?

BUT as this Hypothesis must either stand or fall, according as the Foundation that supports it proves either Truth or Error, I shall leave it to the Tryal of their supposed eternal Justification and Union.

4. I SHALL now proceed to prove, that these Authors, in order to support their Doctrine of eternal

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eternal Justification, have very unjustly affirmed, That our blessed Saviour was by Imputation a Sinner; yea, that he became *very* Sin, &c.

It is to me exceeding strange, that Men of great Capacity and Learning, should take no more Care in examining the sacred Writings, than to make them speak so contrary to the real and genuine Meaning of them: And in order to support the false System which they have espoused, will adventure to write and speak such Things, as tend to depreciate the sacred Character of our blessed Redeemer; and in their Writings and Sermons affirm that of him, which the Scripture denies: For our immaculate and blessed Saviour was in all Respects separate from Sinners, except in the blasphemous Accounts of his Enemies, who did not spare to represent him as the vilest of Criminals. And I hope to make it appear obvious to all whose Eyes are not blinded by Prejudice, that these Authors and Preachers have greatly abused those Texts, which they have built this false Notion upon, to the Dishonour of their sacred Function, and the Lord that bought them. For it is very evident by their Writings on this Subject, (which is certainly to their Shame) they would have it to be credited for an undoubted Truth, That Jesus Christ was made a Sinner in Eternity, that they might be esteemed innocent and clear from Everlasting. But notwithstanding they have used all possible Art and Arguments to establish this pernicious Doctrine, yet I trust that it will evidently appear, that they have grossly perverted the sacred Scripture, in attempting to engage it on their Side: And I shall not scruple to say, that this common Notion of theirs is not only false, but exceeding injurious in its Tendency; and I hope to prove, that it is justly exploded, both by Scripture and sound Argument.

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NOTWITHSTANDING Doctor Crisp (in his Book intituled, *Christ alone exalted*, Page 261.) saith, *It is Iniquity itself; as well as the Punishment of Iniquity, that the Lord laid upon Christ; he bear the Sins of Men, as well as he was wounded for their Sins. The Lord hath laid this Iniquity on him, he makes a real Transaction, Christ stands as very a Sinner in God's Eyes, as the Reprobate, tho' not as the Actor of these Transgressions, yet as he was the Surety.* I presume neither this Author, nor his Admirers, are, or ever were, able to prove, that our Lord, in undertaking as our Surety to pay the Debt for Sinners, did engage to become the Sinner too. What, was he not able to pay the Debt, or make good his Engagements, unless he would become the Sinner? Could his being made the Criminal, render his Ability greater, or put a greater Virtue into his sufferings and Blood? What, was not the Exactness of his holy Life, nor the sufferings he underwent in his blessed Body and righteous Soul, at the concluding Moments of his Death, as really satisfactory to divine Justice from him, as an innocent Person, as from a Sinner?

Obj. No, say these pretended Exalters of Christ; it cannot consist with the Justice of God, to wound his Son, if he is not really the Sinner.

Answer. THIS is a poor Shift for Men of such profound Understanding in deep Mysteries; for surely the solemn Engagements which the eternal Son of God covenanted to perform and undergo, were sufficient to justify God the Father, in exacting the compleat Fulfilment of those Engagements. What Injustice can it be in a Creditor to require the full Payment of his Debt from the Hand of his Debtor's Surety, since he has bound himself to pay the whole? But that this may be made more evident, suppose a Man who is a Criminal, or who

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by his criminal Practice has made himself a great Debtor, by cheating or robbing from another, for which, according to the just Law of the Scripture, he was to make Satisfaction to the wronged Person of four-fold Value, to what he had by Fraud or Theft wronged the other of, and because of Poverty he is not able to pay it, and this poor Criminal has a Friend that will become Surety to pay this great Debt ; What need is there, I pray, for this Surety to become the Robber, in order to render the Creditor just in his Claim of the whole Debt from him ? Is not the Covenant Engagement a sufficient and justifiable Foundation to require the Debt at his Hands ? And therefore, as our blessed Saviour was pleased of his great Love to become our Surety, to pay the great Debts which we have contracted by Sin ; he did thereby become a Debtor, and he was obliged by his Covenant Engagements to pay all the Debts for which he became responsible. But does this make him the Criminal ? No, it cannot be, any more than if an innocent Man should put himself in the Law-Place of another, who has forfeited his Life by heinous Offences, can be esteemed the Offender ; for tho' he dies for a Thief or a Murderer, yet his dying for the other's Crimes cannot make him either a Thief or a Murderer ; for the Obliquity of the Criminal's Acts cannot be transferred to the innocent Person, tho' the deserved Punishment may : For the Man that dies is executed to pay the other's Debt, who had forfeited his Life to the Law, which his Surety pays for him. Likewise, as Jesus Christ had undertook, by solemn Engagements, to pay the full Demands of Law and Justice, for all that the eternal Father had given him ; God's requiring Satisfaction at his Hands, and Christ becoming an Offering to God for the expiating

piating our Sins, does not constitute him a Sinner, but the Sinner's Surety and Pay-master.

DOES it not answer all the Ends of the Soul's Peace and Comfort, to understand that the Lord Jesus loved us, and died to pay our Debts, and that thereby he satisfied the Justice of God for all our Sins? But must he be made the Sinner too, or you will not receive Comfort to your Souls? O take heed what you say or believe in this Affair, lest you reproach your Saviour, and injure your precious Souls, by believing a Lye: For how is it possible, that true Comfort and Peace can flow to us from a false Opinion? Yea, I judge from a muddy Stream, which hath no real Foundation in the Scripture, but as those Asserters of this false Notion have perverted it, to serve their Turn herein.

BUT farther, the Maintainers of this Tenet have not thought it enough to say, that Jesus Christ was made a Sinner; but they have with equal Injustice and Assurance affirmed, that he was made *very* Sin too. Dr. Crisp, in the afore-said Book, Page 401. saith, *This Iniquity that the Lord laid of ours, it was laid upon Christ, and none other; it was the most marvellous Work that ever the Lord did, that he should not only wound Christ for Sin, but make Christ Sin itself.* This the Doctor supposed was well proved from *Isa. liii. 6.* and *2 Cor. v. 21, &c.* But I purpose, as God shall enable me, to examine those various Scriptures, which they imagine support this Doctrine; and hope to make it plain, that they are as truly figurative Texts, as those are that represent Christ to be a Lion, a Star, a Door, a Rock, a Vine, &c. It is very evident, that all the Scriptures that they depend upon, as plain Proofs that Christ was made *very* Sin for us, are Metonomies, which is a Fi-

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gure frequently to be met with in the Bible *. Sometimes you have the Cause for the Effect, sometimes the Effect put for the Cause, &c. In *Acts* xii. 24. we have the Word of God there put for the Success of it; *And the Word of God grew, and was multiplied*: which intends, that the Number of Converts was multiplied. In *Mark* ix. 24. Unbelief is put for Faith; *Lord, I believe, help thou mine Unbelief*: which doubtless is a Prayer for the strengthening a weak Faith, and not to encrease Unbelief. In *Gal.* vi. 12, 14. the Cross of Christ is put for the Doctrine of Christ crucified. In *Col.* i. 20. the Cross of Christ is put for his Body; *And having made Peace through the Blood of his Cross*: which is well understood the Blood of his Body. In *Heb.* viii. 12. you have unrighteous Acts put for the unrighteous Persons; or, in other Words, the Crimes are put for the Criminals; *For I will be merciful to their Unrighteousness*: the Meaning is, that God would shew Mercy to the believing repenting Sinners in pardoning their Transgressions: For God, who is infinitely holy, will never shew any Favour to Sin, as all Unrighteousness is Sin, which the Holy One abhors. In *Isa.* viii. 13. the Object of Fear is put for the Act of Fear. In *Isa.* i. 18. the Sin is put for the Sinner; *tho' your Sins be as Scarlet, they shall be as white as Snow*, &c. this cannot be understood of Sin, for that can never be made otherwise than odious in God's Sight. In *Mark* xiv. 23, 24. the Cup in the Sacrament is put for the Wine in the Cup. In *Mat.* xxvi. 26, 28. *Mark* xiv. 22, 24. the Body and Blood of our Saviour are put for the Bread and Wine in the Ordinance of the Lord's Supper, which the Papists affirm to be the real Body and Blood of our Lord,

* A Metonymy is a changing or putting one Thing or more for another.

as the *Superlapsarians* do of Christ being made truly and properly Sin, which certainly is not less ridiculous, nor less to the Reproach of our Redeemer, than Transubstantiation is; and the Doctrine of the Bread and Wine in the Lord's Supper being the real Flesh and Blood of Christ, is as well supported by Scripture as this Doctrine I am contending against; for besides the Texts above-mentioned, St. *Luke* also informs us, that our Lord called the Bread his Body, *Luke* xxii. 19. which, with what our Lord hath said concerning our eating of his Flesh, and drinking of his Blood, in *John* vi. 51, 53--57. will certainly afford as strong and convincing Testimonies for the Popish Doctrine of Transubstantiation, as these accurate Divines have for their novel Doctrine. But as there are the strongest Arguments possible, supported with Scripture, against the gross Opinion, that the Papists have entertained of the Scriptures above quoted; so I question not but it will be made evident by unanswerable Arguments, with equal Testimony from the Scripture, that these Authors, &c. have also put such gross Constructions upon the Texts in Dispute, as to render them as justly reprovable; notwithstanding they are fond of being thought Men of greater Light than others, as being led by the unerring Spirit, and will often talk of being led and enlightened into their abstruse Opinions. That Text in *2 Cor.* v. 21. *For he hath made him to be Sin for us, who knew no Sin; that we might be made the Righteousness of God in him;* hath been notoriously wrested by the Asserters of this Doctrine, who have not shunned to affirm, that this Scripture does plainly prove, that our blessed Saviour was made by his Father *very Sin*, and *very sinful* too. Dr. *Crisp*, in the Book above-mentioned, when treating of these Words, saith in Page 89. *Mark*

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*it well, Christ himself is not so righteous, but we are as righteous as he was ; nor we so compleatly sinful, but Christ became, being made Sin, as compleatly sinful as we : Nay more, (says this surprising Author) The Righteousness that Christ hath with the Father, we are the same Righteousness ; for we are made the Righteousness of God. There is much more to the same Purpose in this Page, and the Page before it, which is so much like Blasphemy, that I rather chuse to restrain my Pen from transcribing such lothsome Trash, and inexplicable Nonsense, than expose it. But by the way, we may evidently perceive that the Doctor has forfeited the Title of his Book ; for if this is exalting Christ alone, I wonder what will be esteemed a degrading him : And how very unjustly has he treated this Text in each Part of it, by affirming that Christ was made as sinful as we are, and that we are made as righteous as he is ? Now if we consider the real Meaning of the Text, the Opinion of this Doctor and his Adherents must fall ; for it can never bear the Light of Truth. For this Text in both Parts of it is metonomically spoken, and is the Cause put for the Effect ; and the native Language of it is, that God made his dear Son a Sin-Offering for us, though he knew no Sin ; that we might partake of the promised Blessings, or the Righteousness of God in him, *i. e.* that we might partake of all the Blessings wrapped up in the Covenant of rich Grace. But more of this by and by.*

I PRESUME no Man can prove what this Doctor, and others of his Sentiments have affirmed, *viz.* That we are by this Text taught, that Christ is *very Sin*, and a *very Sinner* too. But if we do not understand the Words to have a different Meaning than these Divines put upon them, we shall find that insuperable Difficulties will attend the

the Explication of them: For how is it possible that he should be both the Crime and the Criminal too, in a proper Sense? This is to me inexplicable; but what the Men of this Scheme can make of it, I am incapable to determine, till I see greater Performances than either what their admired *Crisp*, or celebrated *Hussey* have penn'd. It is surprising to me, if any Man is able to prove, that our Lord and Saviour was made Sin in the very Abstract; since they must prove, that he was made either original or actual Sin, or both. If they will attempt to say, that he was made original Sin, I must desire them to shew me how this can be made plain; for I will freely acknowledge that I cannot form any Conceptions about it. If they will affirm that our precious Redeemer was made actual Sin, or as I have heard it to my Grief said, that they believed him to be made all Sin for them; do but seriously reflect upon this Notion, and see what Evil, as well as Absurdity attends it: For is not this the native Style of it, *viz.* That our blessed Saviour was made Blindness of Mind, Hardness of Heart, yea, Murder, Adultery, Lying, Pride, Envy, Profaneness, &c. for his People. Good Lord! what Blasphemy and vile Nonsense does this appear to be? Surely this Doctrine is as vile and ridiculous as Transubstantiation, and I cannot perceive but we may as easily credit that absurd Notion as this, and that this is equally as pernicious, in that this Doctrine must greatly reflect upon the Holiness of God, and of Christ.

(1.) It reflects much upon the Holiness of God the Father, in that it charges him with making his holy Son Jesus the worst Thing that ever was in the World; for what is so bad as Sin? It makes God the Author of that, which he cannot behold but with Abhorrence.

(2.)

(2.) How greatly does this pernicious Doctrine reflect Dishonour upon the divine Nature of Christ Jesus? For if his human Nature was made Sin, how could his divine Nature hold Union with it? since Heaven and Hell can as soon be united as Divinity and Sin. Certainly then this Text is as truly a Metonymy, as those Texts that call the Bread and Wine in the Sacrament the Body and Blood of Christ. I am persuaded that it is to be understood, that our Lord was made a Sin-Offering, and not Sin properly, but what was the Effect or Consequence of Sin; for if we had not been Sinners there would have been no need of any Sacrifice for Sin. But as we had need of such a Sacrifice as Christ was made, who was the compleat atoning Sacrifice to God for us, when he suffered the Just for the Unjust, that he might bring us to God; even then was he made an Offering for Sin, or the Consequence of Sins, when he underwent all the Sorrows, Agonies and Woes, which were due to us for Sins, for he was bruised for our Iniquities, *Isa. liii. 5.* But farther, methinks that Text in *Hof. iv. 8.* may give us some Light in this Point; *They eat up the Sin of my People.* I understand this to be a Charge, which the Lord brings against the Priests, for misapplying what the People brought for Sacrifice; they eat up the Sin of my People, saith the Lord, that is, I judge, the Consequence of Sin, *viz.* what was brought for Sin-Offerings, which the Priests either eat in their Families, or else offered them to Idols, whereby the Offerings were destroyed as to the End designed. If the Gentlemen in the other Scheme take this to mean Sin really and properly, I desire them to shew how the Priest, or any other, could be said to eat up Swearing, Lying, Murder, Theft, and Adultery, (which are the Sins charged

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upon these People in the 5th Verse of this Chapter) for to me it looks impossible.

FARTHER, I cannot but persuade myself, that the latter Part of the Text in Dispute, will tend to furnish us with an Argument against this Notion, which is so generally believed by the *Superlapsarians*, viz. of Christ being made Sin ; for I am ready to conclude, that these Men have all along mistook this Part of the Text also, and that they will find it a difficult Task to prove that the Righteousness there does intend our justifying Righteousness, and how any of the Children of Men can be made truly and properly the Righteousness of God. Let your Eyes look without Prejudice upon the three Verses before the Text, and the two first Verses in the following Chapter, and there you will plainly see that the Apostle is treating of the great and gracious Designs of God, in reconciling Sinners to himself, by the preaching of the Gospel ; and pointing it out to us, as the glorious Contrivance of the infinite Wisdom of God, to lay the Foundation of our Calling through the sufferings of his dear Son : for it was in (or through) Christ, that God was reconciling the World unto himself, *Verse* the 19th. In the 20th *Verse* the Apostle, as an Ambassador of Christ, beseeches and intreats them to be reconciled to God ; and, in order to engage their Attention and Consent, informs them in the Words of the Text, That God had required of Christ the Fulfilment of his Engagements, to answer for the Sins of the People ; and that our Redeemer had fulfilled that Requirement, in making his Soul an Offering for Sin, viz. to atone for the Sins of the People, by being made Sin in its Effects or Consequences, viz. a Sin-Offering, that so we might be made the Righteousness of God in him, *i. e.* the Effects of God's Righteousness. But that this

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may appear in a fuller Light, it may not be improper to shew, that the Covenant between the eternal Father and Son laid the Foundation of what Christ was made for us, and what we are made of God through him: For as this eternal Covenant does include what Jesus Christ was to be, and do, in order to give compleat Satisfaction to divine Justice for our Offences, by his Offering up himself an acceptable Sacrifice to God for us; so likewise God the Father was pleased to engage herein, that Christ Jesus should, as the Reward of his Sufferings, see his Seed, *Isa. liii. 10.* yea, that he should see of the Travail of his Soul to his Satisfaction, *Verse the 11th.* By which I understand, that as our blessed Saviour did perform his Covenant-Engagements to the Father, so likewise the Father would not fail to give him the promised Reward, by converting Sinners through the Gospel of his Grace; and therefore he sends forth his Ambassadors to proclaim his Grace, by shewing, that the exceeding Greatness of God's Love and Grace has been evidently and eminently made known, by the Gift of his dear Son; and the exceeding Love and Grace has been display'd in the most surprising Manner, by his living a mean and humble Life, and dying the most painful Death, to redeem us from all Iniquity, or deliver us from all the dreadful Consequences of our Sins. Wherefore these Ambassadors must not shun, or spare to make use of all Seasons and Arguments to shew Sinners the Necessity of Repentance, or of their being reconciled to God in the effectual Methods of his Grace and Providence. Now as God hath sent forth his Ministers to preach the Gospel of his Grace, so he is pleased to clothe it with Power, to make it effectual for the Conversion of Sinners, by which the stubborn and rebellious Sinner is overcome; *Isa. xlv. 12.*

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Rom. i. 16, 17. I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ ; for it is the Power of God unto Salvation to every one that believeth : for therein is the Righteousness of God revealed from Faith to Faith ; which probably is meant from one Degree of Faith to another. Now, as the Apostle informs us here, that the Righteousness of God is revealed, by making the Gospel powerful to the Conversion of Sinners, or to their Salvation ; I do therefore apprehend the Righteousness here to intend the Faithfulness of God, in performing his Engagements to our Redeemer, as included in that Covenant between them both, before the World began, (*Titus i. 2.*) viz. in calling by his Grace the chosen People, and making them obedient to the Scepter of Christ, *Psal. cx. 3.* In the same Way I understand the Apostle *Peter*, in *2 Pet. i. 1.* *To them that have obtained like precious Faith with us, through the Righteousness of God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ, viz. through the just Observance and Fulfilment of all Covenant-Engagements, both of the Father and of the Son ;* and then this Righteousness will be exactly what I take the Righteousness in the Text to be, viz. the Faithfulness of God, which no Man on Earth or in Heaven can be made in a proper Sense ; and therefore I must conclude, that we are made the Righteousness of God in a metonomical Sense only, which is the Effects of his Faithfulness, Mercy and Grace. And I persuade myself, that no Man will presume to affirm, that we can be made the Faithfulness, Mercy, and Grace of God, in a proper Sense, and therefore the Text must be figuratively understood ; and what Figure the Gentlemen of this Scheme will find for it, more proper than a Metonymy, I know not. But probably I may have pursued this far enough ; I shall therefore proceed to examine the other Texts that *Dr. Crisp*, and

others have supposed to be great Supports of their Doctrine, which speak of Christ Jesus bearing our Iniquities, *Isa. liii. 11. For he (meaning Christ) shall bear their Iniquities.* 1 Pet. ii. 24. *Who himself bear our Sins in his own Body on the Tree.* And *Isa. liii. 6. All we like Sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own Way, and the Lord hath laid on him (viz. Christ) the Iniquity of us all;* or hath made the Iniquities of all to meet on him, as in the Margin. This last Text is the Scripture which Dr. Crisp makes the Foundation of his several Sermons, to prove that our blessed Lord was made a Sinner; and he very injudiciously affirms, that it is the very Fault or Transgression itself, that the Lord laid upon Christ. But I purpose to make it plain, that this Author is grossly mistaken in his Opinion about this Text: and that it was not the Crime or Fault that was laid upon our Saviour, when his Soul was made an Offering for Sin; but the Punishment or Sufferings which was due to us for our Sins, that was laid upon Christ. This I presume appears plain from the Verse immediately before, and the Verse immediately following the Text. The Verse before the Text is as follows; *But he was wounded for our Transgressions, he was bruised for our Iniquities; the Chastisement of our Peace was upon him, and with his Stripes we are healed:* And the Verse after the Text, viz. the 7th Verse, reads thus; *He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his Mouth: He is brought as a Lamb to the Slaughter, and as a Sheep before her Shearer is dumb, so he openeth not his Mouth.* One would be ready to conclude, that no Man of Religion and Reason could scruple to understand the Text in Dispute, otherwise than that the Lord laid on his dear Son the Punishment due to us for Sin only, and not the Sin itself; especially when the

Context

Context explains it to us, by his being wounded, and bruised for our Sins, &c.

BUT what if I should reason a little on this Point, to shew these Divines how ridiculous their Opinion is, by asking, How can this Explication (or rather Subversion of their Text) consist with their Opinion of God's infinite Holiness? For will they suppose that the Holy Majesty of Heaven did take Lying, and lay it upon Christ: That he took Swearing, Blasphemy, Murder, Theft, Pride, Envy, Adultery, &c. and laid them upon Christ. This appears to be such ridiculous and nauseous Stuff, that one would think no righteous Man could endure. Besides, what do these Men conceive Sin to be, that the *very* Crime could be laid upon the Person of Christ? Sure they imagine Sin to be a Heap of Substances, and that the Lord bundled them together, and so laid them on the Head or Back of his suffering Son. But certainly this is a very rude and extravagant Way of thinking, if they thus conceive of the eternal Father's laying our Iniquities on Christ; for Sin is a Breach upon the Royal and Righteous Law of God, either by exceeding the Boundaries which God has prescribed us to keep, or neglecting to do those Duties he hath required us to observe or do: And therefore I suppose the Fault or Act of Sin cannot be laid on any Person or Thing, because Sin is no real Substance. Why can't these Persons as well conclude, that what the Apostle says in Col. ii. 14. must he literally understood? *viz. Blotting out the Hand-Writing of Ordinances, that was against us, and took it out of the Way, nailing it to his Cross.* No Man sure is so ridiculously sanguine as to affirm, that our Lord inscribed the *Jewish* Ordinances or Customs, and fastened them with Nails to his Cross; and yet I cannot see but this may as reasonably be affirmed, as that our Lord had the

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very Acts of Sin laid upon him. And I must desire the Maintainers of this Opinion, (*viz.* That our Saviour had the *very* Fault or Crime itself laid upon him, and that he did bear the *very* Iniquities and Transgressions of his People) to consider how contrary this is to what the Evangelist informs us was the Meaning of that Prophecy; *Surely he hath born our Grievs, and carried our Sorrows*, Isa. liii. 4. *viz.* that it was fulfilled by our Lord's healing the Diseases of the People, *Mat. viii. 16, 17. When the Even was come, they brought unto him many that were possessed of Devils; and he cast out the Spirits with his Word, and healed all that were sick: That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the Prophet, saying, Himself took our Infirmities, and bare our Sickneses.* I am not without Hope, that what the Evangelist assures us was the fulfilling this Prophecy, will be esteemed a sufficient Exposition of the real Intent of it: But if any of this Scheme which I am opposing, will not satisfy themselves with what one Part of Scripture says to explain another, I am ready to believe they will not be able to produce any thing consistent to their own Scheme, free from inexplicable Perplexities, and vile Nonsense. For if this Text that speaks of our Lord's taking our Infirmities, and bearing our Grievs or Sickneses, must be construed in the same Method that they have construed the 6th and 11th Verses, concerning our Lord's bearing our Iniquities, then I believe that the Consequence of such an Explanation will be this, *viz.* That our Lord took upon himself, or did bear, the Palsy of the Centurion's Servant, (*Mat. viii. 5, 6, 13.*) and therefore by this Notion he must be a Paralytick. Our Lord also, (as we read in the 14th and 15th Verses) cures *Simon Peter's Wife's Mother* of a Fever; and therefore, if the bearing of Sicknes in the Text is to be understood

derstood according to Christ's bearing our Sins, in the Sense these Authors expound it, then our Lord must also be sick of the Fever, when he had wrought this Cure upon the Woman. And what can we say to excuse the Consequences that will follow this Way of explaining, or rather confounding the 26th Verse, which is the Verse that the Apostle refers to, as the fulfilling of the Prophecy? *When the Even was come, they brought unto him many that were possessed of Devils: And he cast out the Spirits with his Word, and healed all that were sick.* And then follows, *That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the Prophet, saying, Himself took our Infirmities, and bare our Sicknesses.* If nothing else will deter them from their Way of expounding Scripture, one would hope that the Consideration of the sad Consequences that will attend that Method, will prevent them herein; since what the *Jews* wickedly said of our Lord in *John* x. 20. would be most plainly countenanced hereby. Therefore as our Lord's bearing our Griefs or Sickness, and carrying our Sorrows or Infirmities, does not intend that he was made sick or leprous, &c. when he healed those Distempers, but that he bare them away, or removed them from those that he cured; so I am confident, that these Men who affirm that Jesus Christ was made *very* Sin, and a Sinner in our room, have greatly mistook the Scriptures which they pretend includes their Opinion. I do therefore desire all such as have imbibed the *Crispean* Doctrine, to be very careful for the future of the Character of our Saviour, and take heed lest they make too bold with his sacred Name, by adventuring to call Christ a Sinner; for whoever will adventure thus to call our dear Redeemer, are certainly guilty of speaking Blasphemy, let their Design be never so pretendedly religious.

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BUT probably I shall be esteemed a very censorious Writer, by charging it as Blasphemy on these Authors, &c. for saying, that Christ was made a Sinner, or Sin in a proper Sense: To which I reply, that my Design is not to censure their Ends herein, but to discover the evil Tendency of their Doctrine only, which I judge they are ignorant of, or else I persuade myself that they would not (many of them) for the whole World assert or maintain their Opinions. But notwithstanding I believe these Men to be better than their Doctrines, yet I shall not think one Jot the better of their Doctrine, because I have Charity for them; for it is my settled Opinion, that Error is equally the same, let it come from whose Hand or Tongue it will. A false Opinion is as bad in a good Man's Head, and from his Pen, as it is in the Head, or from the Pen of a vile Sinner. Nay, I think a sinful Tenet or Maxim appears with more Deformity from the Lips of good Men, than from the Lips of an unconverted Sinner, if the latter keeps an equal Decency in his Words and Temper at the same time; and probably it may prove of more pernicious Consequence from the Pen or Lips of a Man of a religious Character than from another. For certainly the better Opinion we entertain of the Person that pretends to instruct us, the readier we are to receive his Doctrine, and the more likely to drink down the Poison, without making any Scruple, than if it came from a Person that we had no Liking to. And I will not scruple to say, that I can never believe that this ridiculous Doctrine would have been embraced by many that have received it, if they had not been attacked by Men whom they had first entertained a great Opinion of, as such whom they esteemed good Men; and this great Opinion of their Goodness has proved a Snare to their Souls.

Souls. I am ready to believe, that all false Opinions among Christians have received their Admittance at this Door, being over credulous or subject to believe what such Men teach, through a vain Conceit that they received this Knowledge from above ; when it may justly be feared, that their Pride to introduce a new Doctrine, has spurred them on to form their new Schemes, under a specious Pretence of exalting Christ more than others ; but, alas ! their Schemes tend to debase the Lord Jesus, while it exalts themselves in the Opinion of those who are fond of all that proceeds from their vain Imaginations. For who but Men of a vehement Thirst after Novelty, could embrace such spurious Stuff, as flowed from the Pens of Dr. Crisp and others, to prove our Lord a Sinner ? I beg leave to repeat what I transcribed before, as the Doctor's Opinion of that Text, in 2 Cor. v. 21. *Christ himself* (says this Author) *is not so righteous, but we are as righteous as he was ; nor we so compleatly sinful, but Christ became, being made Sin, as compleatly sinful as we.* If this Doctrine exalts Christ, and lays the Creature low ; then may we gather Grapes of Thorns, and Figs of Thistles : For certainly by the same Way of Reasoning as this accurate Doctor makes use of to prove Christ a Sinner, all Men that have the Righteousness of Christ imputed to them, must be their own Saviours ; for Sinner and Saviour in this Point, I conceive are as truly the Antitheses to each other, as sinful and righteous is ; which I think is demonstrated thus, *viz.* If by the Imputation of our condemning Sins to Christ, he was made a Sinner ; then by the Imputation of his saving Righteousness to us, we are made Saviours. And how any one who approves the Doctor's Maxim can reject this as a Consequence of his Opinion, may be justly wonder'd at ; for it appears as palpably his Design,

as Words can well describe a Man's Mind, that this Divine was setting up the Creature in the Throne, and debasing the mighty Saviour to the Dunghill: What else can be the Meaning of what he says in the same Page, as his Sentiments upon the fore-cited Text, viz. *The Righteousness that Christ hath with the Father, we are the same Righteousness; for we are made the Righteousness of God. That very Sinfulness that we were, Christ is made that very Sinfulness before God. So that here is a direct Change: Christ takes our Persons and Conditions, and stands in our stead; we take Christ's Person and Condition, and stand in his stead, &c.* I know not what Construction more favourable to put upon this Author, than that he had lost himself in the thick Clouds of his own Imagination, and knew not what he writ; for I will adventure to say, that no Man can prove this Doctrine agreeable either to Scripture or Reason: and yet this Book is admired and carested, as if it contained the most profound Truths of Christianity, and is lent from Hand to Hand, as if the Author was inspired by the infallible Spirit of Wisdom and Knowledge; by which Means the poor People are drawn into gross Mistakes, and are taught to say that of their Redeemer which the Scripture condemns; 1 Cor. xii. 3. *Wherefore I give you to understand, that no Man speaking by the Spirit of God, calleth Jesus accursed.*

MR. HUSSEY, in his Book intitled, *The Excellency of Christ vindicated*, hath taken a great deal of Pains to prove, that our blessed Saviour was by Imputation not only a guilty Sinner, but filthy too. In Page 490. he saith, *God laid the Defilement and Pollution of our Sins upon the undefiled Sacrifice; which he attempts to prove from Psal. cx. 7. He shall drink of the Brook in the Way.* And in Page 492. says, *The Spot of Sin, the Filth and*
Pollutions

Impartially tried by the Scripture. 51

Pollutions of Sin, were imputed to him by his Father, and put upon Christ's Account; this he pretends to prove by *Isa. liii. 6.* But as I have before gave my Opinion of this Text in *Isaiab*, I shall not repeat it here, tho' this Author pleads it as a Proof to this Tenet; if the Reader hath forgot what is said there, in order to remove the false Hopes of these Authors, &c. of founding their Doctrine on that Text, he may soon turn back, and read that Part-over again.

I MUST own myself at a loss to know what this Author means, by affirming that the Pollution of Sin was imputed to Christ. I am certain, the Texts which he produceth, as Proofs of his Doctrine, speak no such Thing; nor can I conceive, that it is in any wise agreeable, to suppose that Pollution ever was, or can be imputed, it stands so remote to the Nature of Things. Neither am I able to understand what Advantage can accrue from such daring Attempt, unless this Author designed hereby to establish their unscriptural Doctrine of imputative Sanctification, tho' at the Hazard of the sacred Character of Christ Jesus, whose Excellency the Title of his Book bound him to vindicate. But what he hath wrote under Pretence of explaining that Text, *He shall drink of the Brook in the Way*; *Psal. cx. 7.* does certainly greatly depreciate both Christ Jesus and his holy Father. The Odiousness of his Comparison does plainly appear in his descanting upon this Text, by affirming, that the Brook *Cedron*, or *Kidron*, is here alluded to, because our Lord crossed that Brook when he went into the Garden, (where his Sufferings commenc'd) to receive the Cup at the Hands of his righteous Father; from which this Author was pleased to infer, that the Potion of Sorrows included therein, was justly to be compared to the unclean Waters of *Kidron*, whereinto the Unclean-

nesses of the idolatrous Places of Worship were cast. And after he has given an Account and Description of this unclean Brook, he says all he can, and more than became him, (as a Vindication of our Saviour's Excellencies; yea, and more than becomes the meanest Professor of Christianity) to prove (if it had been possible) that our Lord received all the Pollutions of our Sins at the Hands of his Father, as included in the Cup which is mentioned in *John* xviii. 11. But is this dealing justly by the metaphorical Scriptures? Or was it possible for this Author to offer a greater Abuse to the sacred Word, and to the holy Character of the blessed Redeemer, than what he has falsely inferred from this Text? And after this ridiculous Writer seems conscious to himself, that he had done enough to prove that our Lord did drink a most loathsome and filthy Draught, and that he must needs be by Imputation filthy, he attempts to remove the Odium, that one would conclude must attend his Doctrine of making Christ inherently filthy, by a very extraordinary and foolish Simile; which is, *That a Drop of Ink, dropped upon a Globe of beated Brass as big as this Earth, could not defile that Globe.* But methinks this Writer hath not suited this Simile to answer his former Work; for hereby the Filthiness of our Sins appear to be greatly extenuated, that it should be compared to a Drop only, and not to a Flood of Filthiness, that has been running ever since *Adam*. Secondly, His Simile does not suit to the Supposition that our Lord drank this filthy Cup, which he tells us was given him by his Father; for in his Simile he represents the Pollution as being dropped upon Christ, but this no ways agreeth to his drinking of a filthy Potion, which he has endeavoured to prove before: For if he would have rendered his Simile consonant to his Doctrine, he should have mentioned the

the polluting Stuff as poured into the Globe, and not as dropped upon it. But probably he was so sagacious, as to foresee that the making his Performance all of a-piece would tend to lessen the Reader's Esteem of it, and so prevent his imbibing the corrupt Opinion, which he with all his Might was endeavouring to establish, to the Reproach of the eternal Father, and his holy Son. For if the holy God cannot look upon so filthy a Thing as Sin is, but with the utmost Abhorrence; then certainly it must be a vile Reproach to his infinite Holiness, to say, that he gave a polluted Draught into the Hands of his dear Son. And I conceive, that it can be no less Dishonour to the immaculate Saviour, to teach that he received this into his very Soul; for what he suffered from his Father's Hand were internal Sorrows; the exceeding Weight of these Sufferings produced that sore Agony in the Garden, and his bloody Sweat, and caused him to utter that Heart-breaking Complaint to his Disciples, *My Soul is exceeding sorrowful unto Death; tarry ye here and watch.* Therefore I conclude, that the Sufferings our Lord underwent for us, are rather to be taken in the Sense of the Bitterness of them, than that there was any Filth included in what he drank. But why should I say rather? since I do not believe it is in any wise Presumption to say, 'twas impossible any Filth could be in that Cup; and that it is no better than Blasphemy, to say it was polluted. So that it is not possible that this celebrated Author's Opinion of the Text in *John*, or of that in the *Psalms*, can be agreeable to the Meaning of them. For if that Text in the *Psalms* (*He shall drink of the Brook in the Way*) does refer to our Lord's exquisite Sufferings in the Garden, and on the Cross, as I am of Opinion it may; then I apprehend, that we are to understand hereby, that he

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was to partake of inconceivable Sorrows and Sufferings in the Way to his Exaltation, or Instalment, at the right Hand of his Father in Heaven. And as our Lord is pleased to represent those mighty Sufferings by his drinking of a Cup, which is a Metaphor frequently used in Scripture, to set forth either smiling, or smiting Providences: Sometimes we read of a Cup of Consolation and Salvation, and at other Times of a Cup of Wrath, and a Cup of Fury and Trembling, &c. all which are designed to hold forth to us the various Dispensations of divine Providence. And as our Saviour makes use of this Metaphor here, and in his Prayer to his Father, entreats that if it was possible this Cup might pass from him; we may I presume call it a most bitter Potion, made up with the most bitter and corrosive Ingredients; a Cup of Trembling and Astonishment, wherein was Wrath and Justice, without any Mixture of Mercy, but free from any Defilement. And therefore if this is his drinking of the Brook in the Way, then surely it will be more agreeable to understand, that the bitter Waters of *Marah* are alluded to by the Brook, rather than the unclean Waters of *Kidron*; and especially, as the Children of *Israel* met with these bitter Waters in their Marches thro' the Wilderness, to their Land of Peace and Rest. I cannot think but this is a more safe and commendable Instance to apply to, as a Type of the bitter Cup which our Lord drank of, than what this Author hath pointed out to his Readers.

BUT if the Men that pretend to exalt Christ, by vindicating his divine and human Excellencies, will give themselves the unbecoming and unchristian Liberty, to write and preach all that occurs to their chimerical Fancies; no wonder if their Consequences are extravagantly erroneous, and tend to cast very gross Reflections upon the All-wise

wife and Almighty *Jehovah*, in the glorious Designs and Methods of his Grace and Providence.

I HOPE by this Time my Reader is fully convinced, that what these Men have wrote, and what others have believed, concerning Christ Jesus being made a Sinner, and Sin, or the Crime itself, is a spurious and unchristian Doctrine; in all Points as vile and ridiculous as the Popish Doctrine of Transubstantion, if not more vile, and must be attended with very dangerous Consequences: Nay, I am well assured from good Hands, that this vile Maxim has been made use of very lately, to countenance great Sins, by pleading that the Sins reprov'd for, was none of their's, but Christ's, as they were laid upon him, and thereby made his Sins; which makes it too plain, that the Consequence of this Doctrine is calling Jesus accursed.

BUT before I leave their Doctrine of eternal Justification, I purpose to take notice how they have endeavour'd to engage some Texts of Scripture to speak for their Opinions of eternal Justification and Adoption: And I hope thro' divine Assistance to make it evident, that these Authors and Preachers have put very wrong Constructions upon the sacred Scriptures, which they have produced as the Basis of their Opinions, notwithstanding they are exceeding positive in their Assertions concerning the Validity of their Doctrines.

* A late Writer of theirs does not spare to affirm, that *the Apostle Paul was actually reconciled to God whilst he was a Persecutor*; and quotes *Rom. v. 10.* for the Proof of his Assertion; *If when we were Enemies, we were reconciled to God by the Death of his Son; much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his Life.* Now who can understand this Author, otherwise than representing

* *Mr. Brine, in Answer to Mr. Bragg.*

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the Meaning of the Text to be this, *viz. That Paul was actually reconciled to God when an obedient Believer, because he was actually reconciled while a rebellious Unbeliever?* If this is not the very Import of this Writer's Opinion of the Text, I should be glad to know what he means; for if he intends that God was actually reconciled to *Paul* while he was a Persecutor, (which I conceive is more agreeable to his Scheme) yet the Sense which he is pleased to put upon the Words, will still appear as inconsistent to good Sense, as it is possible to be worded: For then his Explication of them will render the Meaning to be as follows, *viz. That God was actually reconciled to Paul, when he was an obedient Believer, because he was actually reconciled to him while a disobedient Unbeliever.* So that whether this Gentleman intends *Paul's* being reconciled to God, or God's being reconciled to *Paul*; it will not free him from perverting the Sense of the Text, whereby he represents the Apostle's Meaning to be perfect Nonsense, as well as bad Divinity; for hereby they have construed the Apostle's Meaning to contradict what he has wrote elsewhere, to prove that we have a Mediator and Intercessor with God; but if God was always actually reconciled, there can be no need of these Offices. Therefore if these Authors will pretend to defend what they have repeatedly asserted, it is of absolute Necessity that they reconcile their Doctrine to the Office of a Mediator; or else prove, if they are able, that Christ Jesus does not sustain this important Office: Or, if he is a Mediator, that the Office is needless, and that he only bears the mere Form and Name of the Office, without executing it. Then also must they remove the comfortable Hope and Belief of our having a constant and prevalent Intercessor with God for us: for, as I have intimated

mated before, this Notion of eternal actual Reconciliation, sets aside the gracious Offices of a Mediator, and Intercessor, &c. which Jesus our Redeemer sustains. Therefore I judge it is past Dispute, that the inspired Apostle has a quite different Meaning than what this Author represents him to have; and I think it is of necessary Importance, that the mistaken Men of this Scheme should seek for a new Exposition of this Text, or else acknowledge their Ignorance in the Mystery contained in it.

AND if it is expected that I should give my own Opinion of the Text, I shall humbly offer it in few Words, as follows, *viz.* I cannot but esteem it more agreeable, to understand that the Design of the Apostle herein, is to inform us, that the Death of Christ was the virtual Cause of God's being reconciled to his chosen People, and of our Reconciliation to God, in all the Methods of his stupendous Grace and Providence. God was hereby reconciled to his Elect, by Virtue of the Price of our Redemption, or Pardon, now laid down; for we have Redemption, or the Forgiveness of Sins, through Christ's Blood, (*Ephes. i. 7. Col. i. 14.*) Our Reconciliation to God was procured hereby; as by the dying Love of Jesus, the Way for the Flowings of the divine Grace to reach our Souls, and draw us to an hearty Compliance to the Will of God, is more fully and plainly revealed. But what the *Superlapsarians* teach and write, of God's being actually reconciled to the Elect, or the Elect being actually reconciled to God before Faith, is teaching what the Scripture is entirely silent about, and what is opposite to all Reason and sound Argument: Nay, it opposeth the Offices which our great Redeemer sustains, and many plain Texts of Scripture besides; as, *Rom. v. 1. 2 Cor. v. 20. Isa. xxvii. 5.* Certainly then these Men must be
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mistaken,

mistaken, when they affirm, that the Elect are actually reconciled to God, or that God is so reconciled to them, while they are in a sinful and unconverted State ; for while they are Enemies to God, there is no Reconciliation towards God in them, and therefore they are not actually reconciled, neither is God so reconciled to them, until they repent of their Sins and Rebellions against him, and believe in the only atoning Sacrifice : For I conceive, that the Price of Pardon, or the Atonement, must be pleaded, either by the believing Soul, or else by his Advocate above for him. And I am of Opinion, that the repenting and believing Soul's pleading with God for the sake of Christ, is intended by that Text in *Isa.* xxvii. 5. *Or let him take hold of my Strength, (saith the Lord) that he may make peace with me, and he shall make peace with me.* What the Superlapsarians urge on this Head, as the Reconciliation or Justification which they contend is an Act in God, I shall treat of hereafter in its proper Place, and not trouble the Reader with it here ; but proceed to shew, that notwithstanding I believe that Faith is necessary in all capable Beings, as a mete Qualification for this actual Reconciliation which I am treating for, yet it is as truly of Grace, as if no Faith was required ; since Faith (and Repentance) is the Gift of God, whether it be considered as an Eye, an Hand, or a Power in the Soul : For our Justification is of (or through) Faith, that it might be of Grace, *Rom.* iv. 16. Now as Faith is the Gift or Grace of God wrought in us, whereby the Soul is enlightned to behold a Preciousness in Christ, and a compleat Suitableness in his Merits, to free him from all his Guilt ; so is it likewise strengthened hereby to go to Christ, and lay hold of him as the Lord his Righteousness, or at least to rely and trust alone in the Merits and

and Mercy of this only Saviour, as seeing there is help in him, and in no other. And as the poor Soul is thus cleaving to Christ by Faith, so does it at the same time humbly plead with God for Christ's sake to shew Mercy, and to pardon all Iniquity, and receive him graciously, or into his Favour. And now it is, I believe, that God passeth the Act of Justification or Pardon, tho' the Soul may not have the Knowledge of it. For I am ready to question if many, nay, if most of the Children of God, do not pass thro' their Pilgrimage State without any certain Knowledge of their Justification. For which Reason I am a little surprized, that the Men in the other Scheme will adventure to say, that Justification by Faith, is no more than the Manifestation of what the Believer's State was from Everlasting; or that the Act of Justification was passed in Eternity; and that when they believe, Justification is manifested to them. But certainly we must be very uncharitable to the greatest Part of exemplary Christians, if we will not admit any to be true Believers, but such as have the undoubted Manifestation of their being in a justified State. I cannot be persuaded but many real Christians, *viz.* such as have seen a Preciousness in Christ, and have felt Breathings and Longings of Soul after him, have not arrived to a Manifestation of their undoubted Interest in him, or of the pardoning Love and Grace of God; but have been supported only under their many Fears, by some good Degree of Hope, and a Faith of Dependance on Christ Jesus. This I judge is the most comfortable Attainment which many of the Children of God arrive to in this Life: And notwithstanding this is but a lower Degree of true Faith, yet it is of absolute Necessity to our Justification; since the Tenor of the Scripture informs us, that we are justified by or thro' Faith. And

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tho' it is not of Necessity to our Justification, that we should know it ; yet I am well satisfied, that we must have such a Degree of Faith in the Redeemer, as to depend entirely upon his Merits and Satisfaction for the Pardon of our Sins, and the Acceptation of our Persons and Service with God : for we are accepted only through the Beloved.

THE same Impediments will lie in the Way of their supposed eternal actual Justification, as mentioned above, to oppose their Doctrine of eternal Reconciliation. And I am persuaded, that ten thousand of their Arguments will not be sufficient to remove the dead Weight that obstructs their Opinion herein ; for unless they can produce plain Scripture for their Doctrine, all their Arguments will be esteemed as weak Reeds, or mere sophistical Reasonings. But lest they should imagine that some Parts of the sacred Writings favour their Opinion of Justification, I shall not omit any of those Texts that occur to my Mind, which they are subject to urge as Supports to it, in order to shew their Mistakes therein. That Text in *Rom. iv. 5.* is the most material Scripture for their Purpose that I know in all the Bible, and is made their last Subterfuge in all their Debates : *But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the Ungodly, his Faith is counted for Righteousness.* We are not to understand hereby, that the Believer is excused, or thinketh himself excused from doing good Works ; but that he does not work with Expectation of being justified by them, but by Grace alone, whereby his Obligation to work for the Glory of God, is much more incumbent in his View, and in Reality also. And the Believer's Faith being counted for his Righteousness, I understand, that what Faith applies to, and lays hold of, is intended hereby, and not the Act of Faith only ;

only ; for what Faith is without an Object, is to me an inexplicable Mystery. But this I suppose does not relate to the Dispute I am engaged in at present, and therefore I shall apply myself to what is my Business with the Text in this Debate. Here the *Superlapsarians* imagine is a plain and ample Proof of their Doctrine of Justification before Faith, because the Text speaks of God's justifying the Ungodly ; which, say they, must intend Persons in an unconverted State. And what if I should frankly allow, that all ungodly Persons are in a State of Sin and Rebellion against God ; and that wheresoever the Scripture calls a Man or Woman ungodly, that it intends they are in a sinful and unrenewed State ; yet I presume that it will not add so much Weight to our Opponents Cause, but that it may without great Difficulty be removed. For as the Apostle is, by a long Train of Arguments, proving that our Justification is by Faith, throughout this and the following Chapter ; it is therefore highly irrational to suppose that he should intend here, that the Believer was pardoned and accepted of God while he was in Unbelief : for this would render the Apostle's Meaning as remote from good Sense as possible, and as ridiculous as if he should say, *If you believe, you shall have Righteousness imputed to you for your Justification, because that Righteousness was imputed to you while you were Unbelievers, or ungodly Sinners.* If this is not the native Style of their Doctrine, then will I submit to be censured for an Idiot ; while the Consequence of their Doctrine reflects as great Dishonour upon the Apostle *Paul*, which sets his Writings in one Part of this Chapter at variance with what he has wrote in the other Parts of it, as will be easily seen, by reading the latter Part of the 11th Verse : *That he (meaning Abraham) might be the Father of all them*

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them that believe, tho' they be not circumcised; that Righteousness might be imputed unto them also. Here it appears evident, that Faith is necessary to the Imputation of Righteousness; but that it could not be, if, according to the Opinion of these Divines, Righteousness was imputed before Conversion, nay, from Everlasting. How plainly does this Opinion also confront what is included in the 23d and 24th Verses of this Chapter? *Now it (viz. the Promise) was not written for his Sake alone, that it was imputed to him: But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead.* What Words can more plainly prove, that we are not mete to be justified, or to have Righteousness imputed to us till we believe? And it must be most absurdly strange, as well as contrary to the Tenor of Scripture, that God should pardon a Sinner while in the Height of his Wickedness, and accept him as righteous through Christ, by imputing that spotless Righteousness to him for his Justification, while an Enemy to God, and in Servitude to his Lusts. But let us hear what the Scripture farther saith, to prove that we are justified by, or through believing; *Gal. iii. 24. Wherefore the Law was our School-master, to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by Faith.* And in the 8th Verse we read thus; *And the Scripture foreseeing that God would justify the Heathen through Faith, &c.* That we are justified through Faith, is plain in all the Gospel; but that Righteousness is imputed before Faith, is the mere Conjectures and Assertions of Men, which has neither the Scripture nor Reason to support it.

I SHALL quote one or two Texts more to prove, that the Scripture is a Stranger to this Doctrine of eternal Justification, notwithstanding the Writers for it are so resolute in their Cause, and wise above what

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what is written in the Bible, which saith; *It is one God which shall justify the Circumcision by Faith, and the Uncircumcision through Faith,* Rom. iii.

30. And in Chap. v. 19. *For as by one Man's Disobedience, many were made Sinners; so by the Obedience of one, shall many be made righteous.*

In this last-mentioned Text, methinks if the Apostle knew of any such Doctrine as eternal Justification, it appears necessary that he should have shewn, that the Imputation of Righteousness was as early upon us as the Effects of *Adam's Sin*. No, but says the Apostle, by one Man's Disobedience we were made Sinners; here you have it in the past Tense: But the Effects of the one Man's perfect Obedience is spoke in the future Tense; *so by the Obedience of one, shall many be made righteous.*

BUT farther, if a late * Expositor may be credited (which the Learned in the *Greek Tongue* are the only proper Judges of) the Text in dispute should be read thus: *But believeth on him that justifieth that ungodly one*; meaning *Abraham*, who before his Conversion was an Idolator. If this is the true Reading of the Text, then all that the *Superlapsarians* have expected from it, is entirely lost. For the Apostle almost through this Chapter is treating of *Abraham's* being justified by Faith; or, that Righteousness was imputed to him through believing. Now as the sacred Writings so plainly inform us, that Righteousness is imputed to the Believer, and that we are justified by, or through Faith; and as no part of Scripture mentions the Imputation of Righteousness before Faith: then certainly it must be an impossible Task for these Divines to reconcile their Notion to the important and infallible Rule of the Scripture; and therefore I presume there is no Truth in this Doctrine, but that it is a gross Error, which has produced its Multitudes.

* *Mr. Henry's Exposition of the Text.*

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THAT Text in *Ezekiel* xvi. 8. hath been produced as a Proof for eternal Justification, or at least for the Justification of an unregenerate Sinner. *Now when I passed by thee, and looked upon thee, behold thy Time was the Time of Love; and I spread my Skirts over thee, and covered thy Nakedness, &c.* I must own, that it looks as if the Men of this Scheme were driven to their last Shifts, when they are forced to seek for shelter under the Shades of a Metaphor. But if it should be granted, that this Text has relation to the Justification of a Sinner; yet our Opponents will find but poor shelter for their supposed Justification from it, if they will be so just as to take the Context into consideration too. For if this Verse is to be understood as God's imputing the Righteousness of Christ, when he is said to spread his Skirts over the Sinner; then I presume, that the Day of the Sinner's being born, refers to the new Birth, or Regeneration, in the 5th Verse. And here we have the Sinner's State represented by a cast-out Infant, expos'd to the open Fields, in its Blood and Filthiness, to the lothing of its Person. But what if I should enquire who it was that lothed the Person of this poor polluted Soul, this lost and lothsome Sinner? I am persuaded, that the *Superlapsarians* will not admit that it was God that lothed the Sinner; for then the very Foundation of their Scheme will be thrown down. And certainly wicked Men, nor Devils would not loth and abhor the Sinner for his Ungodliness. Surely then we must consider this as the Effect of the poor Sinner's Conviction, who seeth its own lost and filthy Condition, is lothing and abhorring himself for his Sins, which have loaded his Soul with Guilt, and defiled it with many Pollutions. It will also be necessary to enquire when the Sinner is said to be loved, and covered: Was it in eternity? No, that cannot be; for the Soul is
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represented as conscious of its own miserable and filthy State, and this is said to be the Day of his Birth. And in the 6th Verse we are informed, that God speaks Life to the poor self-condemned Sinner: *I said unto thee, when thou wast in thy Blood, live;* or, when troden under foot, as in the Margin: which must doubtless refer to the poor Sinner's Self-abasement, esteeming itself vile and lothsome, when he abhors himself, and repents in Dust and Ashes. After which, we read in the 8th Verse, that this was the Time of Love, and that God is said, to spread his Skirts over the Sinner, or cover his Nakedness and Deformities. So that here is no manner of Support for their Cause from this Text. But if Justification is hereby intended, it gives their Doctrine a deadly Wound, and intirely subverts all their Expectations from it.

BUT it is farther urged by the aforesaid modern Author, "*That Paul was in a State of Adoption when he persecuted Christ in his Members;* and "*says, Because he was a Child of God, the Spirit of God's Son was sent into his Heart, by whose Influences he was enabled to cry, Abba, Father:*" and further adds, "*That Regeneration doth not make us Sons; but because we are Sons, we are regenerated.*" Whether what this Gentleman hath said, will comport with the Writings of Scripture, or appear dissonant to the important Truth therein contained, I hope will be impartially tried. And I shall first enquire into the Meaning of the Text which he imagines is so great and sure a Prop to his Opinion; which is recorded in *Gal. iv. 6. And because ye are Sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your Hearts, crying, Abba, Father.* What Man, that is not infatuated with a blind Zeal for this Notion, could suppose that this Text speaks in favour of eternal Adoption? For to whom is it that the Apostle writes this Epistle?

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Is it not the believing Churches of *Galatia*? Does not the Apostle call them his Brethren in the 28th Verse of this Chapter, and also in the last Verse? *So then, Brethren, we are not Children of the Bond-Woman, but of the Free.* The same Compellation is given in the 11th and 13th Verses of the 5th Chapter; and also in the first and last Verses of the 6th Chapter. And does not the Apostle inform them also of the Medium, or Way, by which they were brought into the near and dear Relation of Children; *Chap. iii. 26. For ye are all the Children of God, by Faith in Christ Jesus?* It is surprizingly strange, that any Man of Reason can produce the Text now in dispute, to prove that the Apostle was informing the Believers of these Churches, that they were the adopted Children of God before Faith; when there is not one Word in the Text that favours their Opinion. For if it had been written to suit their Scheme, it must have read in the past Tense, thus: *And because ye were Sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your Hearts, &c.* Had it been wrote thus, the bold Maintainers of Sonship before Faith, might have made their Triumphs with a better Grace: But as it now stands, it is rather a Bulwark against their Attempts, and wounds them, while they vainly imagine it to be engaged on their Side. How uncooth will this Gentleman's Proposition, or rather bold Assertion, appear to be, when the genuine Sense of the Text is joined with it, which must be as follows: Because the believing *Galatians* were adopted Children of God, when *Paul* writ his Epistle to them; therefore *Paul* was in the same State when he was a Persecutor and an Enemy to God. Is there any good Divinity, or good Reason, in this way of arguing? And whereas this Author tells us, *That Regeneration doth not make us Sons; but because we are Sons, we are regenerated;*

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I am apt to believe that this unproved Maxim will meet with but little better Encouragement from the Rule of Faith, than what he hath said of the abovementioned Scripture: For I conceive that some Parts of that Divine Rule speak loudly against this Notion, and that no Part approves it; and therefore I presume, that the pure Light of God's Word will raze this lofty *Babel* to the Ground, by shewing the Builders, and under Props thereof, their gross Mistakes, and the Injury they have done to Gospel-Truth thereby. That some Parts of Holy Scripture speak loudly against this Doctrine, is plain; as *John* i. 12, 13. *But to as many as received him, to them gave he Power (or the Right, or Privilege) to become the Sons of God, even to them that believe on his Name. Which were born, not of Blood, nor of the Will of the Flesh, nor of the Will of Man, but of God.* *Gal.* iii. 26. *For ye are all the Children of God, by Faith in Christ Jesus.* One must esteem it a very daring Assertion, to say, That Regeneration doth not make us Sons; when the revealed Will of God informs us, that we are made the Children of God hereby: and also that all unconverted Sinners are Children of Wrath (*Eph.* ii. 3.) even the Elect as well as others.

Obj. BUT is the new Birth or Regeneration what you esteem Adoption?

Answer. No: I take the new Birth to be what prepares or metens us for Adoption. The Work of Regeneration gives us the Nature of Children, and the Act of Adoption is the owning us to be such. Regeneration is what makes us like God, and Adoption is the admitting us to the Privileges of Children; for if Children, then Heirs. And I am not scrupulous to say, that there is a Necessity for the Change that Conversion makes, in order to prepare us for Adoption; for which we are not

mete, without this spiritual Change. But in order to make this more obvious, I shall, in few Words, consider this previous Work of God upon the Soul ; as hereby the Soul is convinced of the sad and heinous Nature of Sin, and the absolute Need of a perfect Righteousness, *John xvi. 7, 8.* Then is Christ as the only and suitable Saviour revealed, and earnest Desires to know and enjoy Christ are excited in the poor, convinced, trembling Sinner ; yea, an earnest Desire, or Breathing of Soul, after a Likeness to God, and to Christ, that he may have Communion with the Father, and with his Son Christ Jesus ; so that hereby a blessed Change is wrought in all the Powers and Faculties of the Soul, whereby the dark Understanding is enlightened, the perverse Will is subdued, and the irregular Affections are regulated, and the Man is brought into a Compliance to the Will of God. Now I judge the divine Image is impressed upon the Soul, as by this spiritual Work the poor Soul is made like to the divine Begetter of this Change, in Holiness, in Love, and in Mercy, and Compassion. And now I conceive the Act of Adoption is passed, as the divine Being now beholds the blessed and gracious Effects of his divine Power and Grace ; and seeing his own Likeness upon the Soul, is therefore pleased to acknowledge this new-born Soul a Son or a Daughter of his own begetting ; *1 John v. 1.* and therefore sends the Spirit into his Heart, as a Witness to his Adoption, or at least as a Spirit of Grace and Supplication, which was to witness *Paul's* Conversion to *Ananias* ; *Acts ix. 11. For behold he prayeth.* I dare not say, that all the Converted have an equal Manifestation of their Adoption, or of the Spirit's Influences, for I believe otherwise ; yet I question not but the Spirit dwelleth in all the Children of God, either as a Comforter and Witness, or as
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their blessed Instructor and Exciter to long after God, to breathe after, and pray for the continual Supplies of Grace, and a greater Meteness for eternal Glory, &c. And I am of Opinion, that that Scripture in *Rom. viii. 14.* confines Adoption to those only who are converted: *For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the Sons of God*; that is, they, and none but they, which is more fully explained in the 9th and 10th Verses; *Now if any Man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his*: which intends the Spirit as a Quickener, is plain by the Words following; *And if Christ be in you, the Body is dead because of Sin; but the Spirit is Life, because of Righteousness.* Certainly these Scriptures have left no room to plead for Adoption before Conversion; and I suppose our Authors and Preachers will see, that they have been building upon a weak and sandy Foundation, which if they do not recede from, will totter, and sink under the insupportable Weight which they have been building upon it, and prove greatly to their Loss, if not timely forsaken: For all Wood, Hay, and Stubble, tho' built upon the Foundation, shall be burnt up; *1 Cor. iii. 12, 13, 15.* And I presume that this Doctrine, &c. is of that Sort, which will not bear the Trial of the Day that is very nigh unto us; since nothing but Truth will pass for Gold then.

BUT lest I should leave any Text unexamined, which the *Superlapsarians* are subject to plead as Supports to their Opinion of Adoption, I shall therefore return, to take Notice of one or two more which I have not yet touch'd upon. The first is, the Prophecy of *Caiaphas*, who was the High Priest of the Jews; *John xi. 50--52.* *And one of them, named Caiaphas, being the High Priest that Year, said unto them, Ye know nothing at all, nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one*
Man

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*Man should die for the People, and that the whole Nation perish not. And this spake he, not of himself; but being High Priest that Year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that Nation: And not for that Nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the Children of God that were scattered abroad. I desire the Men of the Superlapsarian Notions, to inform us what Part of this Prophecy it is that proves their Opinion of Adoption before Faith. For my Part, I cannot see any Ground to infer such an Opinion from it: for if we should grant, for Argument's sake, that by the Children of God, is intended all the Elect People of God, whether the uncalled, or unborn, as well as them that were called; yet I suppose these Men will find no small Difficulty to engage it on their Side, because this is a Prophecy: and it is well known, that the Nature of prophetick Writings is to speak often of Things to come, as if present, or past, by calling those Things that are not, as tho' they were. As for Instance, we read in the 22d Psalm, 16th and 18 Verses, of our Saviour's Hands and Feet being pierced, as if past and over; *They pierced my Hands and my Feet*: And the parting his Garments, and casting Lots for his Vesture, in the present Tense, as if then doing; *They part my Garments among them, and cast Lots upon my Vesture*; when these Prophecies refer to what was to be done many hundred Years after they were wrote. In *Isa. liii. 4.* there what was foretold of our Lord's healing the Sick and Deceased, is spoken of as if already wrought; and the 7th, 8th, and 9th Verses speak of his being oppressed, afflicted, imprisoned, crucified, and buried, as if all these Things had been actually done; when the actual Accomplishment was not till 600 Years or more after this Prophecy was written. Our Lord is spoken of as really born, in *Isa. ix. 6.*
and*

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and yet he was not made incarnate till many hundred Years after *Isaiab* was dead. *Zechariah's* Prophecy, which foretels our Saviour's riding to *Jerusalem*, is wrote in the present Tense; and also his being sold for thirty Pieces of Silver, and the Use which the Money was put to afterwards, is spoken of as past, or compleatly ended, when it referred to what was to be done more than 500 Years after. These Instances, if there were no other Arguments to offer, one would be ready to acknowledge are sufficient to shew, that eternal Adoption is not included herein: for I think it is as reasonable to attempt to prove, that *Judas* had actually sold Christ, that he was actually imprisoned, wounded, crucified, and buried in Eternity, as that the chosen Number were actually adopted in Eternity; which they vainly imagine is proved from this Prophecy. But probably this Text (which tells us that Christ should gather together in one the Children of God that were scattered abroad) does intend that the converted *Gentiles* should be admitted to the same Privilege as the converted *Jews*; and the Children of God that were scattered up and down the *Gentile Nations* were now to be esteemed equal, as having the same Right to all the enlarged Blessings of Gospel-Ordinances as the believing *Jews*, for the Partition-Wall would be broken down by the Death and Resurrection of Christ. And what this Sense of the Words can afford to the Advantage of eternal Adoption, is an unknown Mystery.

THE only remaining Text, that I remember, is produced to favour this Opinion, is, that the Prodigal (mentioned in *Luke* xv. 11, 24.) is called a Son by his Father, whilst he was in his disobedient State: *This my Son was dead, but is alive again.* But before these Gentlemen pretend to prove their supposed Gospel-Doctrine by this

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Part of the Bible, it will be necessary for them to shew, that this is really a Parable; for if it is only a Relation, or History of what was Matter of Fact, then can they have no Place here for the Soles of their Feet. And I am sure, that to prove it a Parable, will require more Skill than most Men imagine. But if they will prove it a Parable, and shew how all the Parts can be explained in a spiritual Sense, then will I undertake, (if I live) to prove, that this, as a Parable, does intirely destroy their Doctrine of eternal Justification; and that it will be of no service to their Cause of Adoption before Faith. But passing by Multitudes of Difficulties, I shall only confine myself to enquire who this younger Son was; or who is intended hereby. First, whether it is not to be understood of *Adam* in his State of Innocency? But here will great Difficulties present themselves; because then the elder Brother must be an Angel, &c. or else a more exalted Being; and then it will appear highly irrational, to represent these careful Guards of the Heirs of Salvation (who rejoiced at a Saviour's being born for us) as exceeding angry at the Conversion of a Sinner; when our Lord is alluding to this, and what is in the former Part of the Chapter, to shew that there is Joy in Heaven when a Sinner repents. But farther, if they understand by the younger Son, the *Gentiles*, and by the elder Son the *Jews*; how will this comport with the believing *Jews* giving Glory to God for his giving Repentance to Life unto the *Gentiles*? *Acts* ii. 18. Besides, let who will be intended hereby, if they will have it to be a spiritual Life intended in the Text, then certainly it must refer to one who was formerly possessed of that Life; and so can only relate to a Backslider returned to his God, and to his Obedience, since the Text saith, that he is alive again: which supposeth that he once, or
before

before his Rambles, was alive. And therefore this, if allowed to be a Parable, will not afford them the least Proof for their Doctrine. From whence is it then, that these Authors and Preachers will prove their fond Notion; since the plain Parts of Scripture is wholly against it, and the mysterious Parts may justly be explained as no Favourers of it? Where will be the next Place of Retreat, where they may secure their Doctrine from the Reproach of flagrant Error? Will they apply to the Fore-appointment of God, and seek their Refuge there? If they do, I am confident that affords them no Relief; for Predestination is not Adoption, nor does it make them Sons, but is an Appointment to Sonship only; as appears plain by *Eph. i. 5. Having predestinated us unto the Adoption of Children, by Jesus Christ unto himself.* Therefore let these Divines prove, if they can, that any unregenerate Sinner is a Child of God. And they must also prove, that they have the Holy Spirit as their Inhabitant at the same time, or else that Scripture will militate against them: *Now if any Man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his, &c. Rom. viii. 9, 10.* I would ask, if it is at all agreeable, either to Scripture or Reason, to call any of our sinful Race, Children of God, before they are either born or begotten of God? How can they be his dear Children, before they bear his Image; yea, while they are the very Image of the Devil, and shew their Enmity to God by wicked Works, and to his People by malicious Revilings, &c? Are these adopted into the near and dear Relation of Children to God? Can these be esteemed Members of Christ, according to the bold Assertions of the *Superlapsarians*; and yet blind, and dead, and exceeding filthy? O! Methinks my Mind is greatly pained and grieved, when I hear Christian Professors Talk of such filthy Creatures being Christ's

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Members,

Members, and God's beloved Children. What, can they be Members of Christ, and yet barren of all Good, but fertile in all Evil? Can this be, when our Lord informs us, all fruitless Branches are so far from being respected, that his heavenly Father taketh them away? *John xv. 2. Every Branch in me that beareth not Fruit, he taketh away, &c.* I am surprized to see how these Men can stand against the Force of the blessed Scripture of Truth, which almost every where runs directly against their fond Notions.

BUT probably this may be more regularly tried under a distinct Head; *viz.* that Branch which grows from the fruitful Root of the *Superlapsarian* Tree, which they style, *Eternal actual Union*. The Meaning of which is, that they had actual Union with Christ whilst they were in their Sins, long before they were ingrafted into him; yea, all the while they were in the wild Stock of Nature; nay, long before either they or the World had any being. These are Mysteries indeed! Sure this is enough to puzzle all the knowing Men on Earth: For as this was never revealed, I judge no Man can know it. But according to the *Superlapsarian* Scheme, secret things must belong to us; yea, such Secrets which the Scripture does not mention, and which is not only above Reason, as indeed some revealed things are, but even contrary to Reason: When they tell us, that a Non-Entity was united to an Existence. Is not this an inexplicable Mystery which these Men teach? And yet it seems this admirable Link in their Chain must not be spared, lest it should disjoint the whole Scheme, and so mar the exceeding nice Composition. But I presume, if their Foundation is laid in Error, the Superstructure must fall; and that the Props which they have endeavoured to support it with, will prove much too weak to uphold it much longer: For unless

less they can produce some plain Text of Scripture to prove this Opinion, I cannot imagine what can induce any humble Christian to believe and teach so intricate and puzzling a Doctrine as this is. Why will good and wise Men in other Respects, yea, Men of Experience in the Grace of God, run after those Things which are not consistent with Reason, and cannot have any Tendency to advance Godliness. It may serve indeed to fill the Minds of their Readers and Hearers with groundless Speculations, which ingrosseth almost all their Talk and Study; and I observe, that these airy Notions are trump'd up in Company where they must know it is offensive, and gives much Uneasiness, and that the Men of this Scheme do not esteem any of different Sentiments to be knowing in the great Doctrines of the Gospel, but these Asserters of what neither they nor any Man knows, and I believe never will know. Notwithstanding a late Writer, whose Book I have now before me *, hath said much with Design to prove eternal Union with Christ: and in order to make way for his Opinion, he is pleased to deny, that the Spirit of Christ is the Bond of Union on his Part; or that Faith, &c. is the Bond of Union on the Believer's Part. In Page 30. he says, *It is not the Spirit on Christ's Part*: Which in my Opinion is saying more than becomes any Divine to say; especially, since I observe that the Scriptures and Arguments which he makes use of to support his positive Assertion by, are vastly foreign to his Purpose, as I judge will be made plain before I have done with this new Point of Doctrine. And I am ready to wonder how this Author came to be acquainted with this supposed Truth, That the Spirit of Christ is not the Bond of Union on Christ's Part.

* *Mr. Gill's Letter to Mr. Taylor, entitled, God's everlasting Love to his Elect,*

Does the Text which he has cited speak any such Language? 1 Cor. vi. 17. *He that is joined unto the Lord, is one Spirit.* What Proof is this, to the nice Point which he is mentioning with all his Might? Can this prove that there was an Union before the Spirit of Christ had effected the Work of Regeneration in the Soul? Nay, it evidently proves, that the Spirit of Christ dwells in all that are united to him; and therefore entirely excludes his Notion of Union before Faith, unless it can be proved, that the Holy Spirit dwells with Unbelievers: And this he is bound to prove, or must acknowledge that the Text confronts his Design. Farther, in the same Page, he tells us, *That the Elect are first united to Christ; and, by Virtue of this Union, receive the Spirit of Christ.* To support which, he has produced the following Argument: *To conceive otherwise (he saith) would be as preposterous as to imagine, that the animal Spirits, which have their Seat in the Head, should be communicated to, and diffused throughout the several Parts of the Body, without Union to the Head, or antecedent to an Union, and in order to effect it: As this would be reckoned an Absurdity in Nature, so is the other an Absurdity in Grace. A Person is first joined, glued, closely united to Christ, and then becomes one Spirit with him; that is, receives, enjoys, and possesses, in Measure, the same Spirit as he does; as the Members of an human Body do participate of the same Spirit the Head does to which they are united.* I will frankly acknowledge, that I am but poorly skilled in Philosophy, and yet I think I am capable to make it appear, that our Author is not a little wanting in the Application of his Argument. For if he will allow the Rules and Laws of Nature to be a true Simile of Grace, he will soon lose his Cause of eternal Union, and of God's delighting in any of the Children of Men

Men while disobedient and ungodly. I am ready to conclude, that it will be no easy Task for this Gentleman, &c. to prove that there is any Life in the Head of a Body natural, when the Members are all dead; or, that the Life of the natural Body is all extinct, before the Head dies, or that the Head can subsist without any living Members; or, that the Body natural is destitute of natural Life, when united to a living Head. If he cannot prove that these Particulars are Truth, I shall not scruple to say, that he has not more considered the Nature of his Philosophical Argument, than he hath the Sacred Scripture which he has brought to confirm it; viz. *He that is joined to the Lord, is one Spirit.* I cannot see how 'tis possible to make a more unjust Application of Scripture than is made of this Text; which is so far from proving this Author's Doctrine, that it evidently subverts it: and its no Presumption to say, that the Rules both of Nature and Grace, do most strongly oppose his Notions. I shall by and by treat of the Rules of Nature, under another Simile, when I am engaged in the Proof of Faith's being the Bond of Union to Christ, on our Part, against this Author's Denial of it.

BUT before I proceed farther, I shall quote some plain Texts of Scripture, to shew that the sacred Book does most evidently set aside their fond Opinion of eternal Union; yea, or of Union before Faith; *Rom. viii. 9. Now if any Man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.* So, *Chap. xvi. 7. Salute Adronicus and Junia my Kinsmen, and my Fellow-Prisoners, who are of Note among the Apostles, who also were in Christ before me.* So *2 Cor. v. 17. Therefore if any Man be in Christ, he is a new Creature.* This Author will needs have these Scriptures to intend only the Evidence of their having Union with Christ, which Union he imagines was from Everlasting; and their
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having the Spirit sent to renew their Souls, and inhabit in them, is only the witnessing to their eternal Union with Christ. But certainly if the Apostle *Paul* knew of any such Union, he must have as great a Value for it as the Men of this Scheme, and be as willing as they to support it, by making it plain and easy, that a Truth of the last Importance, upon which these People build, and fetch their chiefest Comforts and Supports from, should not be veiled : And therefore I conclude, that the Apostle knew of no such Union, or else he was not sensible of the excellent Nature and Use of it ; that he does not make it as evident as if it had been written with a Sun-beam, but rather hides and perplexes the Doctrine, in committing that to Writing which seems to exclude it ; by telling us, that *if a Man is in Christ, he is a new Creature*, which supposes that none but new-born Souls are united to him. If this is Truth, then is the *Superlapsarian* Union a Dream, a mere Fancy, and Contrivance of Men, who have an insatiable Thirst after airy Notions. And tho' this Author would feign persuade us that these Texts do only intend a Manifestation of eternal Union, yet he hath not proved any such Union. He talks indeed of five several Sorts of Union in *Page 38--42.* as Election Union, a legal Union, a federal Union, a natural Union, and a representative Union ; one of which he says was in Time, and the rest in Eternity. But how this Writer is able to prove what he calls the legal and federal Union, two distinct Unions, is to me a Mystery : And if he will please to review what he has wrote on those two Unions, as he hath endeavoured to make them, he will I am persuaded see that howsoever he has distinguished them by Names, that they are one in Nature and Meaning ; which makes it look too much like multiplying Names and Particulars, to perplex the Reader. I

I AM greatly mistaken, if this Gentleman, &c. is able to prove that Election is in any proper Sense an Union, or can intend more than a Setting apart for Union. And I presume that he will not find it easy to get over various Difficulties, which will attend the Explication of his own Way of wording this supposed Union. In Page 38. he says, *There is an Election in Christ from Everlasting.* I desire our Author to weigh and consider well the Import of this Doctrine in his own Way of wording it; for hereby we are taught, that the Elect were in Union with Christ before this Choice was made, or else I know not what to make of Words: For to say that we were elected in Christ according to the Sense which they put upon the Apostle's Words, in *Ephes. i. 4.* is to make their supposed Union to precede Election; but more of this hereafter. I imagine there will another great Difficulty arise, from his admitting that the natural Union was not eternal. This is sure a fatal Blow at the very Root of their admired Scheme; for this destroys the very Notion of eternal Union, &c. but I shall enter upon this hereafter, and ask Pardon of my Reader for making so long a Digression. In Page 31. this Gentleman is attempting to set aside the Spirit, as the Bond of Union to Christ in us, by affirming, *That the Spirit of God, in his personal Inhabitation in the Saints, in the Operations of his Grace on their Souls, is the Evidence, and not the Bond of their Union to God or Christ, and of their Communion with them:* And supposeth that this is proved from *1 John iii. 24.* *And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.* The former Part of this Text is so disagreeable to what this Author is attempting to prove, that he has thought it best for his Purpose to leave it out, as if it no way concerned the Affair in Debate; but I shall transcribe it, as

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a Witness against his new Notion : *And he that keepeth his Commandments, dwelleth in him, and he in him.* Now I am of Opinion that this Author will not deny but that our Regard to the Observance of Christ's Commands, and Strength to perform them, is owing to the engaging and strengthening Influences of the Spirit of Christ; and that Christ by his Spirit dwells in their Souls, to excite their Love to, and Faith in him, &c. If this is granted, then this new Fabrick will totter; yea, you will see it presently fall: For if Christ dwells in us by his Spirit, he must hold Union thereby; a dwelling in us, is the closest Union that I know how to conceive of: And if this is not a Proof that the Spirit of Christ is the Bond of Union on Christ's Part, then may it be said, that none of the mysterious Unions mentioned in Scripture can be proved. I desire any Man to shew me how God or Christ can be said to dwell in the Souls of Men; otherwise than by his Spirit; and if by his Spirit, Christ dwells in his People, then is he united to them by his Spirit. But farther: This Author supposeth, that because the Spirit is the Witness of our Union with Christ, that therefore he cannot be the Bond of that Union; but does it follow, that because he evidenceth that happy Union, that therefore he cannot be the Bond of it? And why can't it as well be urged by this Divine, that the Spirit of Christ cannot be the Seal of this Union Bond, because he is the Evidence of it; since the Witness and Seal are wont to be performed by different Persons? But that the Spirit is the Seal of Covenant-Love, and of our Union with Christ, is, I suppose, beyond all Dispute; and I am ready to believe neither this Author, nor any that are in his Scheme, will attempt to disprove it, because there are so many Instances of this in the Holy Scripture; as *Ephes. iv. 30.* *And*

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grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the Day of Redemption. So *Chap. i. 13.* and *2 Tim. ii. 19.* Therefore, as the Spirit of God is the Seal, as well as the Witness of this Union, I would have our Author never more adventure to deny, that the Holy Spirit is the Bond of Union to Christ, since he will not need to be informed, that the Party that seals is the Principal of the Bond. Farther; it is the Holy Spirit that quickens us; *John vi. 63.* it is he that regenerates us; *John iii. 5, 6, 8.* It is the Spirit of Christ who is the Life of all our Desires and Breathings after God, and the Intercessor for us in our Souls; *Rom. viii. 26.* So also is the Spirit the Maintainer of that spiritual Life by a constant Flow of Grace in our Souls, which will spring up into eternal Life; *John vii. 38, 39. Chap. ix. 10, 14.* Now is it possible that any Man, who is not prejudiced, should deny that the Spirit is the Bond of that living Union with Christ, when he is the very Begetter and Maintainer of our spiritual Life, by which we have Union with our living Head, and without which we could have no Being in Christ; for there are no dead Members in him, whatever these Gentlemen may imagine to the contrary.

BUT then, *Secondly*, our Author is pleased to deny that Faith is the Bond of Union to Christ, in *Page 32.* and enquires, whether we are united by the Habit or Principle of Faith implanted, or by the Act of Faith; if by the Act of Faith, we must inform him, whether it is by the first, second, or third Acts of believing. If we are united to Christ by the Habit or Principle of Faith infused, then (he tells us) that Union is not by Faith on our Part; because Faith, as a Principle or Habit, is the Gift of Grace, of the Operation of God: And if we are united to Christ by Faith,

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as an Act of ours, then (says our Author) we are united to Christ by a Work. And I may ask, what is there in all this? What if we have Union with Christ, in that Part which lies on our Side the Question, by Acts of ours, unto which we are enabled by the Spirit of Christ, who works Faith in us; does this tend to lessen the exceeding Grace of God? Does it therefore follow, that we trust to the Act of Faith, for our Justification or Salvation? What, because we put forth the Hand of Faith (which we acknowledge God hath given us) to embrace our dear Saviour, and thereby hold Union with him, do we hereby lessen, or any way derogate from the Glory of divine Grace? But if we should allow, that the Grace of Love is the only cementing Grace, that on our Part is the Union-Bond, and holds us firm to Christ, which this Author rather inclines to admit; yet I fear that he will soon let go this Doctrine too, as low and mean: because I conceive this will be found to be an Act of ours, as well as Faith, and so consequently must be esteemed a Work too, as it proceeds from us. And, with Submission, I take Love to be a Consequent of Faith, if not a Fruit of it; and how we can be said to love Christ, before we have Faith, as an Eye, to behold the Suitableness of his Righteousness to answer the Necessities of our Soul's Wants, and view the divine Beauties and Perfections that meet and shine forth in him, I judge these Divines will not undertake to prove. Therefore Faith cannot justly be excluded, if Love, which is a Consequent, is allowed to be a uniting Grace. In the 33d Page, our Author accounts it an extraordinary Wonder, that our Divines should fix upon the Grace of Faith to be the Bond of Union to Christ: And well he may wonder indeed, if what he affirms should prove a Truth, *viz. That there is nothing in Faith that*

is of a cementing and uniting Nature ; that it is not a Grace of Union, but of Communion. And now I will also take my Turn to wonder, that he should deny Faith to be an uniting Grace, which is so well proved by Scripture and sound Argument ; my wondering is greatly encreased too, by observing how undesignedly this Author's Pen has infallibly proved the very Doctrine which he so stiffly denies : Nay, he absolutely denieth, that *Faith is a uniting Grace* in one Sentence, and yet plainly (tho' unadvisedly to his Purpose) proves in the very next ; as you will easily discover, by reading the 35th Page of his Book, viz. *Faith is no uniting Grace, nor are any of its Acts of a cementing Nature.* And then follows the very Reverse ; *Faith indeed looks to Christ, lays hold on him, embraces him, and cleaves unto him ; it expects and receives all from Christ, and gives him all the Glory.* O ! what a glorious Truth hath dropped from this Author's Pen ! And is all this acknowledged by him, and yet is he able to prove that Faith has no uniting Quality in it ? If he can, he shall reap the Glory of the Performance ; for I am ready to believe that there is no Author in the World besides, that can prove an Agreement between his closely-united Sentences. I believe it is an impossible Task for any other Pen to prove, that what my Hand lays hold of, it is not united to ; or, that a cleaving to, and embracing of a beloved Object, is not a joining or uniting Act. I must acknowledge, that I do firmly believe that no Man in the World is capable to render this Gentleman's Performance consistent with itself ; or can produce a more flagrant Contradiction between two Sentences immediately following one another, in any Book besides. His Attempt to prove that what he has acknowledged of Faith's looking to Christ, laying hold of, embracing him, &c. is no

more a uniting to Christ, than a Beggar is united to a Person to whom he applies for Alms, deserves no Answer. Had this Author compared these Acts of Faith to a distressed and beloved Child's looking to, embracing of, cleaving to, and hanging about its tender Father, with earnest Entreaties, and raised Expectations for Relief and Supplies of all necessary Things, it might have given us a more just Idea of the real Truth; and the Comparison might have met with less Exceptions, unless from them of his own Opinion. But our Author could not find his own Accounts in any agreeable Comparison, and therefore is pleased to form a very remote one, which has no Respect to Embraces; for what Man ever knew that Beggars were admitted to lay hold of, cleave to, and embrace the Person to whom they apply for Alms. If any Man will attempt to prove this Practice performed by any Beggar, &c. I will undertake, without any Difficulty, to prove, that by whomsoever they are performed, they are uniting Actions.

It is farther urged in this same Page, that Faith is not the Bond of Union with Christ; but *That Union with Christ is the Foundation of Faith and of all Acts of believing, as seeing, walking, receiving, &c. A Man (says he) may as well be said to see, walk, and receive without his Head, or without Union to it, as one can be said to believe, that is, to see, walk, and receive, in a spiritual Sense, without the Head Christ; or, as antecedent to Union to him, or in order to it. To talk of Faith in Christ, before Union to Christ, is a most preposterous, absurd, and irrational Notion.* But I think our Author should first have proved his own Opinion to be most certainly true, and then have proved, that there neither is, nor can be, any just Ground to charge it with more gross Absurdities than he has charged the opposite Doctrine with before

before he attempted to load it with such Ridicule. For the Book which I have quoted these Things from, was wrote on purpose to prove, That all whom God has chosen to eternal Glory, were united to Christ while in their Sins, in a State of Death, Blindness, most filthy and deformed. So that according to this Notion, Christ must have dead, blind, leprous, and deformed Members in the Body which he holds Union with. To free his Doctrine from these Errors will be an exceeding difficult Task; and yet it is absolutely necessary to be done, before it will pass with seeing Christians for sound Divinity.

BUT to shew that our Author has been liberal enough, in heaping Reproaches upon that Doctrine to which he stands Opponent, I shall attempt to prove, that notwithstanding we cannot produce good Fruit, or Fruit unto Holiness, until we are in Union with Christ, the living Head; yet that there is no Absurdity in saying, that there is Life produced in the Soul previous to our Union with Christ: And that this may be maintained without derogating from the Glory of divine Grace, since we acknowledge, that it is the Product of the same Almighty Power, which raised our Saviour from the Dead, who was quickned by the Spirit, 1 Pet. iii. 18. And surely this Doctrine gives more Honour to the holy and glorious Head of Influence, Christ Jesus, (by teaching, agreeable to the Scripture, that a spiritual Work, which begets a spiritual Life in us, is necessary to meten us for Union to him the living Head) than that which teaches contrary to Scripture, that a Man may be closely united to Christ, without being made a new Creature; which is uniting the greatest Contraries that can be, *viz.* Life and Death, yea, Darkness and Light together: so that this Opinion opposeth all Rules of Reason, as well as several plain Texts of sacred

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sacred Scripture. And I am exceedingly mistaken, if the Simile which he has quoted from *John* xv. 4, 5. will prove of any Service to his Cause: but indeed he has endeavoured to open a deep Chancel for this Text to run in; but when he has used his utmost Skill, the Texts will be found to militate against his Assertion, of Faith's being no Bond of Union to Christ. For, notwithstanding he has tried the Rules of Nature, to introduce his new Doctrine, yet I presume that it will prove but little to his Purpose, when his Arguments from those Rules are duly weighed. In *Page* 36. he very truly informs us, *That there must be first an Union of the Soul and Body of Man, before he can be said to live; and there must be Life in him, before there can be Reason, or the Exercise of it: Man must first become a living Soul, e'er he can be a reasonable one.* That all this is Truth, I question not, and I hope no Man of Reason will attempt to find Fault with it; but tho' I approve the Argument, yet I do not believe that his Application will appear so agreeable to Truth, *viz.* That because there is an Union of the Soul and Body of Man, before he can be said to live, that therefore the Soul of Man must be united to Christ before he has spiritual Life: For he may as reasonably argue, that there is an Union between a living Soul and a dead Body, as for an Union between Christ, the living and spiritual Head, and dead Members. Therefore if he cannot prove, that in Nature a dead Body is in Union to a living Soul; or, that the Body is not instantly quickned at the Soul's Union to it: what is there in all his Philosophy, to prove that any of the Children of Men had Union with Christ, while spiritually dead, or in Unbelief? That there must be a Principle of Life, before there is any Exercise of Faith, I agree with him; but that there was Union to Christ, before
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this Principle of spiritual Life was wrought in us, I must take the Liberty to reject ; and purpose to prove, that I have the Scripture on my Side: As I trust will be made plain, when I shall treat of the Similes which I judge this Author hath misconstrued ; who, in order to make his Way thereto, informs us, *That as Reason, and the Exercise of it, is a second Remove from the Union of the Soul and Body ; so is Faith, and the Exercise of it, a second Remove from Persons Union to Christ. There must be first a vital Union to Christ, before there can be any believing in him. This (he tells us) is fitly and fully exemplified in the Simile of the Vine and Branches, which Christ makes use of to express the Union of his People to him.* But with Submission to this Author, I would desire to know, why Faith must stand at an equal Distance from an Union to Christ, as Reason doth from the Union of the Soul and Body ? Are there no Disparities between Things natural, and spiritual Things ? If not, then may divine Revelation be argued out of Countenance ; and it will not be possible to make a Judgment of Things, so as to distinguish what is Truth, and what is not. For if all the Rules of Nature, without Exception, must determine the Methods of Grace ; then will it follow, that because the Union between Soul and Body is dissolved at Death, that the happy Union between Christ and his Body mystical is dissolved then too ; and because the Exercise of the rational Powers will continue in the Soul in its separate State, that therefore we may live a Life of Faith when the Union is dissolved. But as this is dissonant to all Religion, so we should always consider what the Rule of Scripture teacheth in all its Similes, lest we should strain them, so as to pervert the very Design for which they are alluded to, in order to establish Opinions of our own forming. I shall therefore try if this
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Author has not said too much for his Notion, when he tells us, that it is fitly and fully exemplified in the Simile our Lord makes use of in *John* xv. 4, 5. *Abide in me, and I in you: As the Branch cannot bear Fruit of itself, except it abide in the Vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the Vine, ye are the Branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much Fruit.* Now let the Reader but seriously weigh the Import of the first Part of the Text, and there you will see the very contrary to this Author's Opinion fairly implied. *Abide in me.* I desire to know what need there could be for this Exhortation, if no Act, or Acts of ours, is concerned about the maintaining this blessed Union with Christ? And that this intends Abiding in Christ by Faith, is evident from what the Apostle *Paul* saith of Faith, under a like Simile; *Rom. xi. 19, 20. Thou wilt say then, the Branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in. Well, because of Unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by Faith, &c.* It is certainly an evident Truth from this Text, that our Standing in Christ, is by Faith on our part; which exactly agreeth with our Lord's Exhortation above, *Abide in me.* Now if our Standing and Abiding in Christ is by Faith, then do we hold Union thereby; and whatsoever holds us to Union, is the Bond of it.

BUT our Author is trying his Skill upon the above-cited Text in *John* (in Page 37.) and tells us, *That these Branches must first be in the Vine before they bear this Fruit.* I wonder who will attempt to deny this? or does this Gentleman imagine that we do not allow that the Apostles of our Lord were Believers; or that we should scruple to acknowledge that they were united to Christ, when our Redeemer bestowed this Exhortation upon them, who had been his faithful Followers, and

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admitted to the greatest Intimacy with him for several Years? But farther he proceeds, and tells us some Truth mixed with some Error in the same Page. *The Branches of the wild Olive-Tree must first be ingrafted into the good Olive-Tree, become one with it, and so partake of the Root and Fatness of it, before they can bring forth good Fruit. Could there be the Fruit of Faith in Christ's People, before their Union to him, then the Branches would bear Fruit without the Vine, without being in it, or united to it; contrary to the express Words of our Lord. From the whole, it may be safely concluded, that Union to Christ is before Faith, and therefore cannot be the Bond of Union; no not on our part: Vital Union is before Faith.* I am very sure that he has not drawn a just Conclusion from the two Texts, which he has pretended to give us the Meaning of; and whether an unjust Inference is a safe one, I shall leave to the Judgment of all impartial Men. But in the first Place, it may be most agreeable to try what is in this Author's Argument. And I may adventure to say, that there is no part of it that gives the least Wound to the Doctrine which he so strenuously opposes; nor do I know any of the People that are in the Medium or Gospel Scheme, that plead for Fruitfulness before Union; but it does not follow, that because we bear no Fruit until united to Christ, that there was not a Principle of Life in us before: For the Scion must have Life previous to its Ingrafture, or can never have vital Union with the Tree. A dead Branch can never receive Nourishment, nor is it fit for Inoculation. The various Methods that the skilful Gardiner takes with the Branch, to prepare it for an Union with the Tree, I judge may not unfitly be alluded unto, since the Scripture makes use of the Simile of grafting, to instruct us herein. The Graft or Branch is first separated

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from the old Root, from which it naturally sprung. Secondly, it is formed, or shaped, by the same Hand, to fit it for joining with the Stock or Tree; and then it is fixed in it, and close bound to it, which keeps it firm, and secures it from receiving any Injury by shocking Winds, &c. How far this may be fitly applied to the Work of the Spirit, in convincing the Soul of Sin, and regenerating us, &c. I shall leave to the Judgment of the Reader, lest I should be thought to strain the Simile. But to return to make some farther Remark upon the foregoing Argument and Conclusion of this Author: Here I cannot omit to observe, how he trifles with the Simile of Grafting. The Expressions of wild Olive-Tree, and the good Olive-Tree, and of partaking of the Root and Fatness of it; he borrows piece-meal, and has omitted to quote it in the Margin; I would hope that it is not with design to hide the Truth from his Readers: But this I am persuaded of, that if he had been so just as to transcribe the remaining Part of the Simile, his Readers would have been more capable to pass a Judgment upon the Conclusions he has pretended to draw from the Premises; but probably he foresaw that the whole Series would spoil and ruin his Design. But as Truth is not afraid to come to the Light, I shall transcribe what is left out, as necessary to the Dispute: *Thou wilt say then, the Branches were broken off* (meaning the unbelieving Jews) *that I might be grafted in.* (viz. a believing Gentile) *Well, because of Unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by Faith. Be not high-minded, but fear; Rom. xi. 19, 20. so Verse 23. And they also, if they abide not in Unbelief, shall be grafted in; for God is able to graft them in again.* Here is a strong and convincing Argument that none are united to Christ in Unbelief, since 'twas Unbelief that hindred the Jews from being ingrafted into

into him; for if they remain not in Unbelief, they shall be grafted in. Will any Man in the World pretend to prove that this Writer's Inference is just, when he tells us, *That from the whole it may be safely concluded, that Union to Christ is before Faith, and that therefore Faith cannot be the Bond of Union; and that vital Union is before Faith?* Is not this flying in the very Face of the Apostle's Argument, and adventuring to oppose plain Words? For it's very evident, that what our Lord calls abiding in him, the Apostle calls a standing in Christ, which he tells us is by Faith. And is it not plain, that Faith is necessary to our Union to Christ, since the Apostle tells us, that if the *Jews* abide not in Unbelief, they shall be united or grafted into the good Olive-Tree, meaning Christ? Now if Unbelief must be removed, antecedent to our being ingrafted into Christ, then must Faith have a Being in our Souls antecedent to this Union: for, as Unbelief, that spiritual Darkness, is removed, Faith, the spiritual Light, takes Place in the Soul; nay, it is past all Dispute, that Darkness is dispelled by the Approach of Light, and as Light makes its Advances by slower or swifter Motions, so must Darkness necessarily make its Retreat, and fly before the breaking Day. This I am persuaded will hold good in a spiritual, as well as in a natural Sense.

THUS I hope it does appear beyond all Controversy, that there is no actual Union with Christ before Faith, and that the Spirit of Christ, and Faith, are the Bonds that maintain this happy and close Union between Christ and his Members.

BUT probably it may be expected, that, according to my Promise, I should now return to make some Remarks upon the several supposed Unions which this Author treats of from *Page 38* to *43*.

I HAVE before observed, that what he calls by the different Names of legal and federal Union, is the same, tho' divided to multiply Particulars. I must own, that I do not understand any real Difference between a Law Union and a legal Union; or between Christ's being a legal Surety, or a Covenant Surety; between his Covenant or Law Engagements, and his legal or lawful Engagements. These supposed Unions are so much alike, and so near allied, that it will be attended with some Difficulty to make them two: But our Author tells us, that the legal Union arises from Christ's Suretyship-Engagements, and that he is the Surety of the better Testament, that drew near to God the Father in the Name of the Elect: And when treating of the federal Union, he tells us, *That Christ is the Mediator, Surety, and Messenger of the Covenant of Grace.* Now so much Difference as is between the New Testament Engagements, and the New Covenant Engagements, I conceive lies between legal and federal Engagements; or probably there may be as wide a Difference, as between what is lawful, and what is according to Law. But if this Author can make more of it, I shall not envy his Skill; for I shall say no more at present on this Head, as supposing that the Number of eternal Unions must be one less than this Author has made them.

I SHALL therefore begin in the Order which our Author has ranged them, and first treat of what he is pleased to call Election Union. And I shall take the Liberty to say, as I said before, that Election is not an Union, but a Fore-appointing the Persons to an Union: And if the Men of this eternal Union Scheme would but give themselves the Pains to attend upon the Text, (which I am well assured they greatly mistake) in *Ephes. i. 4.* and sedately weigh the Verse before it, and the

the four Verses following the Text, I am persuaded that they will see abundant Reason to alter their present Opinion of it. And in order to give the Reader a more distinct Idea of the Meaning of it, I will transcribe the Text with the Verse before it, and the two Verses immediately following: *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed with all spiritual Blessings in heavenly Places (or Things) in Christ: According as he hath chosen us in him, before the Foundation of the World, that we should be holy and without Blame before him in Love: Having predestinated us unto the Adoption of Children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good Pleasure of his Will; to the Praise of the Glory of his Grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved.* Now as the Apostle is ascribing Praise to God for those spiritual Blessings which he had graciously bestowed on them, he acquaints them, that they have these Blessings in Christ, (who hath blessed us with all spiritual Blessings in heavenly Things in Christ.) And in the next Verse, which is the Text in dispute, (I conceive) he is informing them, that it was according to the eternal Design of God, to bestow these divine and special Favours upon them in Christ, that is, when in him: And this will render the Meaning to be as follows, *viz.* That the Apostle is praising God for those divine and special Blessings enjoy'd by his Saints, to which they were chosen through Christ before the Foundation of the World: and this Way of expounding the Text exactly agreeth with the next Verse, where we are informed, that they were predestinated unto the Adoption of Children by Jesus Christ. Now why their being chosen to these spiritual Blessings should not intend by, or through Christ, as well as their Election, or Predestination to the Privileges of God's adopted Children, is by Christ,

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Christ, I believe will be something difficult to explain ; and especially when we observe, that what the Apostle tells us in some Parts of his Writings, is in Christ, he in other Parts tells us is through Christ ; as for Instance, in *Ephes. iii. 12. In whom we have Boldness and Access with Confidence, &c. Chap. ii. 18. For through him we both (viz. Jews and Gentiles) have an Access by one Spirit, &c.* And as this same Apostle informs us, that we have Redemption, and Pardon of Sins in Christ, in *Ephes. i. 7. Col. i. 14. so in Rom. iii. 24. he tells us that we have Justification (that is Pardon) through the Redemption that is in Christ Jesus. So Chap. v. 9. Much more then being now justified by his Blood, we shall be saved from Wrath through him.* Therefore, if these Authors cannot prove that an Election to an Union is the uniting Act, I do not see how they will be able to maintain the Union which they please themselves so much with, as to furnish the People with the Notion of, both from their Pulpits, and from the Prefs. And with Submission, if Election was the uniting Act, then I conceive that the Apostle would not have said that we were chosen in Christ ; but rather that we were joined or united to Christ by Election. But if we were to survey the several Sorts of Elections to an Union, which are made use of among Men, we shall find that they speak loudly against the received Notions of these Men ; as will appear by considering, *First*, the Choice of the Stones to compose a Piece of Building ; for altho' in the Contrivance thereof the Materials are all made choice of, yet the designed Stones to compose the Superstructure cannot be said to be joined to the Foundation, for there must be the framing, and other previous Work effected, and the Stones fixed upon the Foundation, before it is actually united to it : *Ephes. ii. 20--22. 1 Pet. ii. 4, 5.*

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And the Choice of a Branch to ingraft into a Tree, is not the uniting Act: It is only the fore-ordaining, or appointing it for Union; for there must be the various Methods mentioned above, first made use of, before it can be said to have Union with the Tree. But probably it will be objected here, that the Purposes of Men may, and often do fail of Accomplishment; and that therefore this does not prove that God's Act of Election is not the uniting Act. In Answer to this, I would have it observed, that it is the Act of Election only that concerns this Dispute; and that I have no Design to compare the weak and uncertain State of Man's Nature and Purposes, to the unchangeable Nature and stedfast Decrees of the Almighty. For altho' all the Counsel and Purposes of God both shall, and will stand firm, and no Power or Policy, either of Men or Devils, can prevent the Accomplishment of them; yet, to speak with Reverence, his Decree of Election was not an uniting the chosen Objects to Christ, but the securing them unto an Union: and I conceive, that the Act of Election among Men is as near to this sovereign Act of the Almighty, as the Act of chusing in the Creature can resemble the Act of chusing in the Creator. *Secondly*, I shall now make some Remarks upon what this Author calls a federal Union, in which I judge the legal Union is included; and therefore I shall treat them as one, believing that if this is disproved, that the other cannot subsist. That there was a Covenant of glorious and stupendous Grace, concluded between the eternal Father and Son before the Foundation of the World, I do firmly believe; and that this eternal Covenant was confirmed or sealed, by the Blood of Jesus Christ, according to his gracious and irreversible Engagements therein stipulated. I do also believe, that this Covenant, as it related to Mankind,

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kind, was all of pure Grace ; as hereby the Redemption, Conversion, and Salvation of all that were included therein was secured ; as each Person thereby engaged, were infinitely faithful, and able to perform all the Conditions of it : But that it was a Covenant of Works and unspeakable Sufferings to our Redeemer ; *Gal. iv. 4.* And hope that I can say to the Praise of divine Grace, that I adore the infinite Wisdom of God that contrived, and the infinite Love, Grace and Power, that performs, all the unspeakable Conditions of this Covenant of surprising Grace. But upon the most sedate and mature Thought and Inquiry, I cannot see that there is any real Ground to suppose that this Covenant did unite us to Christ, as Members of his mystical Body, or as Branches in him the mystical Tree, nor as his Spouse and Bride. That there is no being in Christ before Faith, either as Members of his Body, or as Branches in him the mystical Vine or Olive-Tree, hath been already proved : and I shall now attempt to prove, that we have no relation to him as a Spouse or Bride, until we are called, or do believe in him. And I do hereby call upon the Men of the *Superlapsarian* Scheme, to produce any Text of Scripture that informs us that God, in either of the Persons of the Godhead, calls any of the Children of Men his Spouse, or Wife, or Bride, before they are made so by a mutual Covenant. The Apostle *Paul* indeed speaks of this near Relation betwixt Christ and his Church, in *Ephes. v. 23.* but I hope these Men will not attempt to say that the Apostle does intend by the Church here (of whom Christ is the Head) Persons in their sinful or unconverted State. If they will, let them give one single Instance of it from the Rule of God's Word, and we'll drop the Controversy. In the 2d Chapter of *Hosea* we have an Account of the wise Proceedings of the Lord, in
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reference to this near and dear Relation. From the 14th to the 19 Verse, we are informed of the gracious Methods that the Lord promises to take with the People, whereby to oblige them unto himself; and in the 19th and 20th Verses he is pleased to promise, that he will betroth them unto himself for ever, in Righteousness, in Judgment, in Loving-kindness, Mercy, and Faithfulness.

BUT the Scripture must be no Rule in this great Affair, if the Opinions of some Men are regarded, for they are neither consistent to Scripture nor Reason; and what our Author has quoted from Dr. Goodwin, is not worthy to be esteemed either good Divinity, or good Argument. But lest I should be censured as a Misrepresenter of the Doctor's Opinion, I shall transcribe what relates to the Point now under Consideration: Our Author quotes the Doctor's Works, as an honourable Advocate for his Cause of Union to Christ in Eternity; and in Page 25. tells us, that the Doctor writes of a threefold Union, (but as it's the first only that my present Business is with, I shall not mention any other here) as follows, *The first of which is relative, whereby we are said to be his, and he ours; as you know he is called our Husband, and the Church is called his Wife; and before the Husband and Wife company together, there is such a Relation made by Marriage, and the Husband may be in one Place, and the Wife in another; so that there can be no Communion between them, and yet be Man and Wife: So is the Union between Christ and you as compleat in the Relation, before he acts any Thing upon you, tho' he be in Heaven, and you on Earth, as if you were in Heaven with him.* Here we have the bare Assertion of this admired Doctor without any Rule of Scripture or Reason to uphold it, and therefore not worthy of any Regard, either from the religious, or mere rational

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Part of the World. This Comparifon is very ridiculous indeed, as it is calculated to teach Men what is the very Reverse to Scripture or Reason. It is furprizing, that a celebrated Doctor should endeavour to perfuade us, that fome of *Adam's* finful Race were related to Chrift Jefus in the firm and engaging Bonds of conjugal Union, while in their Sins, and without the Consent of the fupposed Bride. How contrary is this to what the Lord by the Prophet informs us, in the *Chapter* which I have quoted above? *Hof. ii. 14. Therefore behold I will allure her, and bring her into the Wildernefs, and fpeak comfortably to her,* (or friendly to her Heart, as in the Margin.) Now after the Lord has fhewn them their bewilder'd and loft State, he fpeaks friendly, or comfortably to her. In the 16th, 17th, and 18th *Verses* we read of the many great Favours promifed to this People; and then follows, *I will betroth thee unto me for ever, &c.* Thus we are taught, that the Lord by his drawing Methods wins upon, and procures the Consent of the People, before he enters into this endearing Relation with them: And this Method does well agree alfo with the Rules and Laws of Nature; for, as no Man in his Reason is willing to enter into conjugal Bond with, or take a Woman to Wife, while ſhe discovers a perfect Hatred to him, ſo neither can he make her his Spouſe without her Consent. Certainly then there never was any Doctrine that oppoſed the Rules both of Nature and Grace in a more flagrant Manner than this, which afferts a Marriage-Union with Chrift from Eternity, and therefore it need not be ſaid before Faith and Repentance. How exceeding ridiculous and inconcluſive is this Doctor's Argument, to prove an Union before Faith; viz. *That a Man and Woman are called Husband and Wife before they company together, there is ſuch a Relation by Marriage,*

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riage, and the Husband may be in one Place, and the Wife in another ; so that there can be no Communion between them. What is this to the Purpose, since this is frequently the Case with Man and Wife after they have companied together ? But was their Marriage consummated without each other's Company ? Was they Man and Wife before Consent of both Parties ? Did the Man marry the Woman by a solemn Contract, without the Contract's being reciprocal ? Was it possible for the Doctor to obtain any Credit from unbiass'd Readers by such Reasoning as this ? What, because the Man is obliged to depart from his Spouse for a Season, at such a Distance that renders their having present Communion impracticable, notwithstanding they had by Marriage-Covenant declared their mutual Consent to join in the Relation of Man and Wife ; does this prove, or can it afford a Supposition, that she was his Wife without her Consent ? Certainly our Author was pushed on by an over-fond Zeal for his Opinion, when he quoted this Passage from the Doctor.

BUT probably he may imagine, that he has said enough to prove this Covenant-Union in his own Book ; for in Page 52. he is pleased to affirm, *That there are three Gifts and Instances of God's Love to his People before Conversion, which are not to be matched by any Instance or Instances of Love after Conversion : The one is the Gift of himself to them in the everlasting Covenant, which Covenant runs thus ; I will be their God, and they shall be my People.* Now as this only concerns the present Point, I need not transcribe the other two here, since this only seems natural to a Marriage Union : And I must here acknowledge, that there is too much Ground to beget Surprize in the Reader, to behold how exceeding positive this Author is in his Assertion, who does not scruple to af-
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firm, that this infinite Gift is before Conversion, when the Scriptures which mention this Gift evidently prove the contrary, as is obvious from many Texts. But I trust that I shall be excused the transcribing them all by my Readers, provided I produce sufficient Evidence from the Rule of Faith; I shall therefore mention that Text in *Heb. viii. 10.* *For this is the Covenant that I will make with the House of Israel after those Days, saith the Lord; I will put my Laws into their Mind, and write them in their Hearts; and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a People.* This the Apostle quotes from *Jer. xxxi. 33.* And if you read the Sequel in each Chapter, you will find more to the same Purpose; where you will easily perceive, that this Covenant is a mutual Agreement between God and converted People: for you read here, that the Laws of God were to be written upon their Hearts, and in their Minds, before God is their God, and they are his People. And wheresoever this Covenant is spoken of, it is mentioned as a Promise of what shall be, and not was, or is in Being, before the People have passed thro' a spiritual Change. It is not said, I will write my Laws in their Hearts, and in their Mind; for *I am* their God, and they *are* my People; and much less that he was their God, and they his People from Everlasting: Therefore, to assert that God gave himself to any People before their Conversion, is more than any Man can vindicate, and must be a very palpable Mistake in this Author, since this Doctrine stands in direct Opposition to the sacred Text that he pretends to found it upon.

BUT to return to the eternal Covenant made between God the Father and Son: I cannot but wonder that the Men of this Scheme should be so positive that this Contract should unite them to Christ,

Christ, when there is neither Scripture nor Reason on their Side. This Covenant no doubt was the very Foundation of this happy Union, but not the uniting Covenant. And what if I should attempt to make a Comparison, in order to give the Reader some Light into this important Affair; which I hope may be done with such Caution, as not to bring any divine Truth into contempt. Let us then suppose that a Man of great Worth and Merit, should purpose in himself to espouse a poor miserable Woman who is in Captivity, under grievous Slavery, and who is vastly in Debt to her Patron, which Debts she had contracted before her Captivity, and this was the Occasion of her present Slavery, &c. and this rich and worthy Person, foreseeing that when he has bestowed much upon her to accomplish her for Communion with himself, and has stripped her of her Rags, and adorned her with clean and rich Attire, that she will be an Object mete for his Delight; he therefore does first propose to pay her Debts, that she may not long continue in Slavery, and therefore treats with her Creditor, enters into Bond, and becomes responsible for all her Debts, and fixes the Day of release. Now though all this is done, and the whole Design is to lay a sure Foundation for a Marriage-Union; yet no Man of Reason will attempt to say that this is the Uniting or Marriage-Covenant. No, the Woman must first be acquainted with the Design, and must also give her Consent to it, and mutually covenant with him, to be for him and for no other, before the Union is made.

So I conceive that our Blessed Saviour entering into Covenant in Eternity to redeem us to God, was only settling the Conditions, and laying a sure Foundation for a federal Union with his People; which Union I conceive is no other than that mutual Covenant made between him and them at Conversion,

version, when they by Faith receive Christ, and own him for their Lord and Head.

THE next Union which this Author takes notice of, is the natural Union that is between Christ and his People. This has reference to our Lord's taking our Nature into Union with his Divine Nature; so that in respect to this Nature, he is made like unto us. And since our Author acknowledges that this Union was not in Eternity, and as there is nothing herein but what does agree with the Holy Scriptures, I need not say any more to it; but only wish that he was as conformable to the Truths of the Gospel in all other Points as he is in this.

I SHALL make some Remarks on the last Union which this Gentleman hath treated of; and that is representative Union, which he is pleased to tell us (in *Page 42.*) is both from Everlasting and in Time. *It is (says he) sufficiently evident, that there is a representative Union between Christ and the Elect, both from Everlasting and in Time, which is independent on, and prior to their believing in him. He represented them as their Head in Election, and in the Covenant of Grace, as has been already observed.* And I hope it hath been sufficiently proved, that Election, and the Covenant which was made in Eternity, did only appoint and settle the Way and Means of effecting this Union with Christ. But lest the Men of this Scheme should conceit that their Cause is rightly founded, I shall endeavour to make it plain, that this Author has given away his Cause, by acknowledging that the natural Union was not in Eternity; for hereby their Notion of representative Union being eternal, is entirely destroyed. For it is exceeding remote from all the Rules of Argument, to suppose that Jesus Christ represented the elect People as Members in him, when he had no meaner Nature than
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divine. This Doctrine supposeth that the eternal Godhead represented human Creatures, which must be a grand Stride towards deifying the Creature Man; and especially when their Notion of eternal actual Union is joined with it, which could not be without the actual Existence of the Persons so united. Neither could the Son of God represent the elect Body in Eternity, if his human Nature did not then exist: For how was it possible that he should as Mediator and Head of the Election, represent that Body before he had joined himself with human Nature, which Nature was necessary to constitute him the Mediator? For, with submission, the elected Head of the select Body, must first be possessed of that Nature, which was essential to his Mediatorial Office and Headship, before he could be an actual Mediator between God and Man, or could represent that Body which he was chosen Head of. The Unreasonableness of this Doctrine will appear by this Argument also; viz. That if the eternal Election and Covenant did unite us to Christ, then also must we have Existence; or else it supposes that we had a well Being, before we had any real Being. And I am persuaded these Divines may as reasonably argue for our real Existence in all our Parts and Faculties in Eternity, as for this Union which they so strenuously plead for, which this Author, in *Page 29.* tells us, *is an Union of the whole Persons, Souls and Bodies, of God's People to the whole Person of Christ.* Now how there could be a real Union (he calls it real in the same *Page*) of whole Persons in Eternity, without their real Existence, is a Mystery of Mysteries. Thus I judge it is plain, that the Unions which this Author has, without Proof, asserted to be eternal, have no Foundation either in Scripture or Reason; therefore must be the mere Fancies and Conceits of such Authors and Preachers,

Preachers, who are subject to amuse themselves and others with what they esteem very profound; which indeed have no Bottom, and therefore must be deep.

I SHOULD now have further proceeded to consider what this Author hath said with Design to prove that God did from Everlasting take the fullest Delight and Complacency in the Elect, while in their Sins and Rebellion against him; but as this will give too great an Interruption to my further prosecuting this their Notion of eternal Union, I shall reserve the Answer of that Part of his Book till I have done with this Subject.

I SHALL therefore now consider the Import of some other Texts of Scripture, which the Men of this Scheme are subject to imagine favour their fond Notion of eternal Union. First, that Text in *2 Tim. i. 9.* where the Apostle speaks of Grace being given us in Christ before the World began; from which these Men argue that they was then united to, or actually in Christ. But I hope to make it plain, that this cannot have respect to our Union with Christ when this Grace (intended in the Text) was given; because this Grace does evidently intend our Calling, as will appear obvious by reading the Words: *Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy Calling; not according to our Works, but according to his own Purpose and Grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the World began.* That this Salvation, which is prior to our Calling, is to be understood of our being preserved in Life to the appointed Call by Grace, is not (as I remember) denied by the *Superlapsarians*; and therefore I need not say any thing farther to it, but confine myself to the contested Part of the Text only, *viz.* the Grace that is said to be given us in Christ before the World began. Here I conceive we are informed of the sure Promise which the eter-

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nal Father made to his Son, of the Grace that should be given to the chosen People to effect their Conversion; and as this evidently relates to our Calling, it may with as much Reason and Justice be urged, that we were called in Eternity, as that we were then united to Christ. So that I understand the very Meaning of the Words to be this: That God hath preserved us, and called us, according to his own eternal Purpose, and the Grace included in the Promise which was made to his Son for us, before the World began. And I conceive that this agreeth with what this same Apostle writes to *Titus*, Chap. i. Ver. 2. *In hope of eternal Life, which God that cannot lie, promised before the World began.* This Promise I take to be the Grace which is intended in the Text now in dispute; as our Calling lays the Foundation of this Hope in us, and is (I believe) the Beginning of eternal Life in the Soul; which I take to be the Meaning of what our Lord says in *John* iv. 14. *But the Water that I shall give him, shall be in him a Well of Water, springing up into everlasting Life.* Therefore, by our having Grace given us in Christ before the World began, I apprehend to be the Grace in the Covenant that was made with Christ in Eternity; or a sure Promise that all needful Grace should be treasured up in Christ, to be conveyed from him to all his People. So that what is mentioned in the Text to be given in Christ, does still intend by, or through him, or as given to Christ for us, to be reserved in him as our great Treasurer; *For it pleased the Father that in him all Fulness should dwell*; and it is of his Fulness, or the Fulness lodged in him, that we receive Grace for Grace. But if what has been said to this Point is rejected, and all the Scriptures which evidently prove that we are not united to Christ before we believe, will still be construed by these Men as intending no more than the Manifestation of what was in Eternity;

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nity; then may it upon as good and suitable Foundation be urged, that the human Nature of Christ, was in being from Everlasting; and that his being born of the blessed Virgin, was only the Manifestation of his human Nature to Men, or a Declaration of what was ever in being. But what will the Consequence of this Doctrine be? This must render the Accounts which the Scripture gives us, of Christ taking Flesh in the Womb of the Virgin, and being made the Seed of the Woman, a prodigious Farce. And yet the Consequence of their Doctrine of eternal Union is not less ridiculous, if their Meaning is included in their Words: For if whole Persons, Souls and Bodies, are united to the whole Person of Christ, which intends in the Unity of his two Natures; then must all those whole Persons exist, or the Union is impossible. And what Mr. Gill has quoted (in the 25th Page of his Book) from Dr. Goodwin, carries the same Meaning in it, if we may judge of the Doctor's Meaning by his Words, which is as follows: *We were one with Christ before the World was; there is one way of Union then: Jesus Christ in the human Nature cometh down and represents us, doth what we have to do here, is now another Way of Union.* If we must not look for a Man's Meaning by his Words, then 'tis not impossible but Mr. Gill might mistake the Doctor's Meaning as well as another Man: but if Words is the Rule to judge by, then certainly we must understand that all the Persons that were one in an eternal Union, must have a being then, and so the human Nature of Christ must then exist; which corresponds with what the Doctor says of Christ coming down in human Nature, which supposeth that the human Nature came from Heaven, as a former Inhabitant there, or else this profound Doctor should have told us that Christ Jesus came down to unite with human Nature, which would have prevented

vented his Readers suspecting that he believed the Pre-existence of it.

Obj. BUT the Scripture informs us, that God declareth the End from the Beginning, *Isa.* xlvi. 10. and calleth those things which be not, as though they were, *Rom.* iv. 17. True, so he does; but this does not prove their Existence. The All-wise Jehovah did declare just upon the Fall of our first Parents, that though the Serpent or Devil had overcome them, yet that the Seed of the Woman, (*viz.* our blessed Saviour) should bruise the Serpent's Head, or overcome the Devil. But was the Conquest gained when this Promise was made? Or was the Battle then fought? Did it not refer to what should be hereafter, and not what was then effected? Nay, was Christ then the Woman's Seed? Was there any thing transacted in the great Affair? Sure no rational Man will attempt to affirm that these things were actually performed, because they were actually decreed and promised: for though they were as sure to be done, as if they had been already effected, because the Purpose and Promise of God standeth fast for ever; yet neither the Purpose nor Promise are the Performance of what is decreed and promised, but the securing the Performance of it, as a God of infinite Perfections hath contrived, and promised the Accomplishment. And therefore he is said to call those things that be not, as though they were, and not that they really are. And I presume that this Text speaks loudly against the actual Existence of these things, that are called as though they were; for the Text says that they are things that are not, that is, they are not in being; for they are called as though they were, and not that they really are, or do exist. That this happy Union was decreed, and included in the eternal Covenant between God the Father and Son, I do firmly believe; but that we

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were then united to Christ, is not at all agreeable either to Scripture or Reason, and I presume neither is, nor never will, or can be made appear: For, notwithstanding these Men are pleased to tell us, that God's Decrees are Acts in God; yet certainly they cannot be so grossly infatuated by their admired Notions, as to be rendered incapable to distinguish between the Decree to do a thing, and the actual Performance of it. And for what Reason is this esteemed an Argument with them? What though we do acknowledge that God's Decrees are his Acts, yet those Decrees do not give being to the things decreed. Is it not a sufficient Answer to this shifting Argument, to inform them, that though God's Decrees are Acts, that yet they are no more than Acts of Decree, which is only the purposing, or fore-appointing the Being, or doing of the things decreed, and not the fulfilling the Decree: For if God's Decrees do give being to the things decreed, that is, if we were actually justified, and united to Christ in Eternity, because God had then decreed these things, while we were without any Existence either of Soul or Body; I cannot for my Life see, but by the same Parity of Reasoning, our Souls were actually united to our Bodies in Eternity, because God had then decreed this Union: For, with all due submission to these profound Divines, the purposing of this Union was an Act in God, as well as the other, and in order of time I judge must precede it; since it is unreasonable to suppose that a Decree should be passed for the uniting of Man to Christ, before the designed Favourite was delineated in the eternal Mind, and the Creature in all his Parts, Powers, and Faculties was decreed. To entertain any Opinion of God's decreeing to unite us to Christ, justify and save us by his Merits, without a previous Decree to create us, as consisting of Soul and Body,

Body, is to render the Divine Being as preposterous in his Schemes, as the Man would be that lays his Foundation before he has contrived the Proportion of his Superstructure, or chosen the Materials that must compose it. It is therefore beyond all reasonable Dispute, that the Creatures designed to enjoy this happy Union with Christ, were first contrived, and decreed by the All-wise Jehovah, to consist of Soul and Body, e'er the Decree for their Happiness could take place: And if so, then I apprehend that God's decreeing to unite our Souls to our Bodies (whereby to make us compleat, according to what he had formed in his wise eternal Mind) was as truly an Union in Eternity, as what these Authors contend for: Nay, and all the Creatures and Means which God had decreed for Man's Use, might be said also actually to exist; for this Decree, to make the World for Man's Abode, and the Creatures for his Work and Food, and all the Means for his Soul's Good, whether for his Conversion, or Sanctification, in order to fit him for Glory, was an Act in God. Now what a fine new Scheme of Impossibilities will from hence arise, to amuse this polite Age withal? And who, or what is he, that will be able to contradict, or at least to overthrow such profound Doctrine as this is, which hath so fine a speculative Foundation to support it? And to conclude this Point, I could wish that the Men of this Scheme of eternal Union, would sedately consider the many Absurdities that attend their Doctrine, and no longer amuse themselves and their Readers with these fond Opinions, which are as ridiculous as they are abstruse, and cannot answer any laudable End; since it tends to fill the Mind with mere Vanity, and turns the Conversation of Christians to things vain and unprofitable, notwithstanding they may fondly imagine that they profit hereby. And it is too evident,

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dent, that Sermons and Discourses that are not turned to favour these irrational Notions, are despised by them as too mean and low for their Acceptance. So that it may justly be said, that they are troubled with itching Ears, that cannot be satisfied with what is agreeable to sound Doctrine; nothing but these airy and chimerical Notions, or what tends to establish them, is reckoned Food for their Souls, which I am satisfied is no more real Soul-Food, than the East Wind. I cannot think it Presumption to say, that this People imagine that they reap much Advantage from Preachers who have been long darkening Counsel by Words without Knowledge. And from the whole it may be said, that what Mr. Gill charges the Doctrine of Faith before Union with, will justly be fixed upon his eternal Union Scheme, *viz. That 'tis a most preposterous, absurd, and irrational Doctrine.*

AND now I purpose to return to what I promised, *viz.* to consider the Scriptures and Arguments which the *Superlapsarians* produce to establish their Doctrine of God's taking the fullest Delight and Complacency in the Elect from Everlasting, even all the while they are in Sin and Rebellion against him. And in order to set things in as just a Light as my Capacity is capable to do, I shall farther observe what Mr. Gill hath wrote on this Subject. I have already quoted what he hath said in the 52d Page of his Book, *of three Gifts and Instances of God's Love to the Elect before Conversion, which cannot be matched by any Instance or Instances of Love after Conversion.* The first he tells us is the Gift of God himself to them; but this I have already proved to be a great Mistake in this Author: for God never gives himself to any of the Children of Men, until they believe, as is plain from the whole Series of Scriptures that mention this great Gift. The second Gift is the Gift of his Son,
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But I presume that this will not appear genuine neither, if it be considered as worded in his Proposition, which tells us these Gifts are given *to* the People of God, but in his Explication, he words it as Christ being given *for* them, *viz.* to die in their room and stead, and so obtain eternal Redemption for them. But why does our Author recede from his Proposition, wherein he tells us that these matchless Gifts (as indeed they are) were *to* the People before Conversion? But when he pretends to prove his Assertion, he tells us, Christ was given *for* them. Could he have proved his Proposition he had certainly laid a strong, if not an improveable Foundation for his Doctrine: For where God or Christ dwell, there is their Delight. *Isa.* lxii. 4. *John* xiv. 23. *Jesus answered and said unto him, if a Man love me, he will keep my Words: And my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our Abode with him.* Here is the Love of Delight indeed, but this is after Conversion; and there's no part of Scripture, when duly considered, and compared with other Scriptures, that can give the least Shadow of an Argument for their Doctrine. It was indeed the infinite and matchless Love of God, that gave his only Son to die for us, to obtain our eternal Redemption; and this surprizing Instance of Divine Love appears to be the Effect of the infinite Compassion and Good-will of a gracious and merciful God, by that known Text, *John* iii. 16. *For God so loved the World, that he gave his only begotten Son (for what end) that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting Life.* His infinite Compassion to poor lost Sinners was such, that he gave his Son, to prevent their perishing in their Sins; and such was his Good-will, or Love of Benevolence, that he gave his Son, to procure everlasting Life for us. But this is not the Gift of Christ *to* us; for such as
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have Christ given to them, have this eternal Life began in them, 1 *John* v. 11, 12. *And this is the Record, that God hath given to us eternal Life; and this Life is in his Son. He that hath the Son, hath Life; and he that hath not the Son of God, hath not Life.* So then it is plain, that Christ is not a Gift to any of the Children of Men while they are in a State of Death, which is their unconverted State; since this Text informs us, he that hath the Son hath Life; and he that is destitute of this Gift, hath not Life, or remains in Death. Therefore I conclude that our Author is mistaken in this Part of his Proposition too.

The third and last Gift before Conversion, our Author tells us is the Gift of the Holy Spirit to them, to convince of Sin, of Righteousness, and of Judgment. And here I shall take the Liberty to offer it as my Opinion, that this Gentleman has asserted what he will find very difficult to prove, *viz.* That this is the Gift of the Spirit to them, since the Text informs us, that the Spirit is sent as a Reprover of them, and not as a Gift to them; for I judge that the Spirit is not given to any of the Children of Men till they are converted, or at that very Instant. And I am not doubtful but that this will agree with the Holy Scripture, and is included in the Text which this Author has Reference to, in *John* xvi. 7, 8. *Nevertheless I tell you the Truth; it is expedient for you that I go away: For if I go not away, the Comforter will come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the World of Sin, and of Righteousness, and of Judgment.* From hence it is evident, that the Spirit was to be sent as a Comforter to the Disciples of our Lord, and a Reprover to the World. And I am at present of Opinion, that we are here to understand that the Holy Spirit which was sent to the Apostles and Disciples

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Disciples of our Lord as their Comforter, was by them the Reprover of the World ; which to me appears plainly couched in the Words of Scripture above quoted, and is correspondent to other Parts of Scripture. The Apostle *Paul* was sent to convince Sinners, to open their blind Eyes, and turn them from Darkness to Light, and from the Power of *Satan* unto God ; *Acts* xxvi. 17, 18. And this same Apostle calls the Gospel the Power of God unto Salvation ; *Rom.* i. 16. And in *Cor.* iv. 15. he tells the *Corinthian* Christians, that he had in Christ begotten them thro' the Gospel. Thus we see that *Paul* is said to do that Work by preaching the Gospel of Christ, which at other times is attributed to the Holy Spirit ; and therefore I judge, that this convincing Work is what the Spirit of God effects upon the Minds of Sinners by the Gospel preached, &c. and so the Spirit does this Part of his blessed Work by Instruments, in making the Gospel preached by them effectual, to convince Sinners of the heinous Nature of Sin, and the Danger their Souls are in thereby ; and the Need of the Righteousness of Christ, to justify and save them, &c. And then I conceive, the Spirit of Christ opens the Heart of the Sinner, and exhibits Christ to the Soul, which begets earnest Desires in his Breast, for an Interest in this suitable Saviour ; by giving the Soul Faith, as an Eye to behold the divine Love and Excellencies of Christ ; and then, as an Hand, or Power to lay hold of, and embrace him, as his only saving Friend : And now is the Spirit given them as their Comforter, or at least as an Intercessor, in their Souls. So that I believe this Author is mistaken, when he tells us, That the Spirit is given to the Elect before Conversion ; and I do not think it any Presumption to say, that he has laid a false Bottom to build his Notion upon, and has stumbled at the very Threshold.

THIS Author, after he has used some few Arguments, and made some witty Banter upon the Opinion that he opposeth, (of which I may take some Notice hereafter) is pleased to quote several Texts of Scripture in *Page 56.* which are introduced as follows: *God's Love to his Son as Mediator is an everlasting Love: Thou lovest me, says Christ, before the Foundation of the World. This Love was a Love of Complacency and Delight; for Christ as Mediator was from Everlasting, then by him, i. e. the Father, as one brought up with him, and was daily his Delight, rejoicing always before him; Prov. viii. 30. Now God loves his Elect with the same Love he loves his Son as Mediator. Hence Christ prays for the open and manifest Union between him and his People; That (says he) the World may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.* From which our Author infers as follows: *If God therefore has loved his Son, as Mediator, from Everlasting, with a Love of Complacency and Delight, and he has loved his Elect from Everlasting with the same Love he has loved him; then he has loved his Elect from Everlasting with a Love of Complacency and Delight.* Thus far I have transcribed from this Gentleman's Book: And now I shall try if it cannot be made appear that he has unfairly inferred his Notion from this sacred Text. I am apt to believe that he knows the Word *as* is of the comparative Degree, and rarely intends an Equality; and therefore I am persuaded, that he will soon be made sensible that he has put these Scriptures upon the Rack: since he well knows, that this Particle *as* is often used, when there is a vast Disproportion between the Things or Persons compared, and can only intend a Likeness, and that of a very minute or small Degree. As for Instance, when *Jacob* met his

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his Brother *Esau*, and found his Countenance clothed with Respect and Mildness, which before was filled with Anger and Fury, he says, *I have seen thy Face, as tho' I had seen the Face of God*; Gen. xxxiii. 10. We are also exhorted to be *holy as God is holy*; 1 Pet. i. 15. and *perfect as our heavenly Father is perfect*; Mat. v. 48. Now will any Man adventure to affirm, that these Texts intend more than a Likeness to God and his Perfections? Certainly no Man in his Senses will or can imagine that Creatures, howsoever refined and exalted, can equal their Creator in his Holiness, Goodness, or any of his divine Perfections. I am therefore ready to conclude, that these Instances may serve to shew that this Author has not fairly treated those Texts of Scripture which he has quoted with Design to establish his Opinion. But if the above-quoted Texts are not sufficient to disprove the odd Construction which this Author has put upon that Text in *John xvii. 23*. I shall cite two Texts more, which I hope will not leave any room for him to say that they are remote to the Purpose; viz. *John xiii. 34. A new Command I give unto you, that ye love one another [as] I have loved you.* So *Chap. xvi. 12. This is my Commandment, that ye love one another [as] I have loved you.* The very mentioning of these Scriptures one would think is enough to satisfy any impartial Reader, that the Text in Dispute has been strain'd and forced beyond the real Meaning of it, and are sufficient to expose the Unreasonableness of his Argument which he has drawn from it, without my making any Comment upon them.

I SHALL now attend to what this Author is pleased to infer from *Prov. viii. 23--32*. which treats of Jesus Christ's taking Pleasure in, and having Delights with the Sons of Men from Everlasting, or before the Earth was made, &c. This

Part of Scripture I take to be the last Subterfuge of these Divines, and seems to speak something for them at the first View of it : But I hope to shew, that they greatly mistake the real Import of this Part of our Bible, and that it cannot intend Christ's taking the most intimate, sweet, ravishing Delight and Pleasure (which he tells us the Word rendered *Delights* in the Original is expressive of) in any of the Sons of Men while in their Sins, rebelling against God ; for with such Christ does not dwell, nor rejoice with them, or over them. We read indeed that God will rejoice over his People in their Church-State, but not in any unregenerate Sinner. I have already proved, that God does not dwell with, or in any People, till converting Grace hath made them mete for his Abode. And the Apostle *Paul*, in *Ephes. ii. 19--22.* plainly informs us, that God's Habitation is prepared or builded for him by the Spirit. And it is very evident, that the Delight which Christ is said to take in the Sons of Men, is in the Fore-Views of his dwelling with them. And I will adventure to say, that *Mr. Gill's* Translation of the Word *Delights*, gives me the greatest Reason in the World to believe, that this Delight which Christ took in the Fore-Views of his People, was of his dwelling with them, and in them, by his Spirit ; since he tells us, that the original Word is expressive of the most intimate Delight, which intends the greatest Familiarity. And I presume that this cannot be in their unregenerate State, while unhumbled and ungodly ; for while such, the Lord is said to resist them ; *James iv. 6. 1 Pet. v. 5.* And how a resisting, and standing at a Distance from the Object, is consistent to the most intimate, sweet, ravishing Delight and Pleasure in the same Person, at the same Time, is hard to reconcile. Therefore, if the Lord does not vouchsafe to dwell in, or with an unregenerate Sinner,

Sinner, then consequently he cannot delight in such; for if he did, he would not keep at a Distance from them: But we are assured, that *the Proud he knoweth afar off*, (*Psal. cxxxviii. 6.*) and such are all unconverted Sinners, whose Minds must be humbled, before God will admit them to his Delight. And if our Election was to a Conformity unto the Image of Christ, and he is said to delight in the Sons of Men from Everlasting; what Man of unprejudiced Mind, could imagine that this delightful View which Christ took of them, was while they were most unlike to him? or that he should take Delight in them, when wallowing in their Filthiness, and bearing the deformed and hateful Image of the fallen Angels, living in Malice and Envy, being *hateful*, and hating one another? *Tit. iii. 3.* O! sure this State is the very Reverse to that which the Son of God viewed the Elect in, which gave him such a pleasing Prospect of them, that he could say, his Delights were with them. Certainly then we must understand hereby, that this delightful Fore-View which the Lord Jesus took of his People, was in their regenerate and humbled State, with his own and his Father's beautiful Image impress'd upon them; yea, doubtless, he in this View looked beyond the State of their Disobedience, and beholds them beautified with Grace, even with a meek, humble, holy and heavenly Mind, metely adorned and refined by his Spirit and Grace, to be an holy Temple for him to dwell with, and in them by his Spirit; *John xvii. 23.* And I question not but it was in this View that God the Father delighted in the People of his Choice; and therefore he fore-appointed them to bear the delightful Image of his Son, which they are wholly destitute of before their Conversion: For before the holy Spirit makes the Gospel effectual to turn them from
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Darkness to Light, and by his divine Power has made them willing to submit to the Will and Pleasure of God, the Holy One of *Israel* cannot take Delight in them. But when they are made willing and obedient, by the gracious Work of the Spirit, and do wear those spiritual Ornaments of Humility, Faith, Love, Goodness, Mercy, Meekness, &c. whereby they bear in their present Measure a Likeness to Christ their spiritual Head; then it is that God delights in them, and the Father and Son are pleased to make their Abode with them; *John* iv. 23. And I am not scrupulous to say, that no Part of the sacred Scripture, when justly considered, or truly compared with other Texts, does give us the least Ground to believe that God did delight in any of the Children of Men short of this View, and that the above-cited Text in *Prov.* viii. 31. is to be understood in the same Light, if it does not refer to a farther View, which the Son of God took of the most perfect State of his Members upon Earth, *viz.* when the Kingdoms of this World shall become the Kingdoms of God, and of his Christ; and the Will of God shall be done on Earth as it is done in Heaven; *Rev.* xi. 15. *Mat.* vi. 10. It is in this last Sense that I rather incline to understand the Text, tho' probably both may be intended.

W H A T this Author has asserted in *Page* 58, and 59. of God's chusing his People in Christ before the Foundation of the World, as an Act of Love, founded upon and springing from his Delight in them, does certainly require more Proof than what he has produced, and I believe more than any Man is able to produce. It is strange to me, if he is able to prove his positive Assertion agreeable to either Scripture or Reason; since the Almighty chose them to be Holy, and without Blame before him in Love: So that this early Choice of them

them was not the Effect of his Delight in them, but that they might be the Objects of his Delight, when united to his Son; to which happy Union they were predestinated, that they might bear his Holy Image, and stand compleat in his Righteousness, without Blame or Guilt before God. And I think that it hath been already proved, beyond all reasonable Contradiction, that there is no Union with Christ before *Faith*; and therefore no Delight in the chosen People before Conversion.

BUT farther; This Author is pleased to inform us, that God's loving and chusing the People of *Israel*, was an Emblem and Representation of his special Love to, and Choice of, the true and spiritual *Israel* of God. Thus far he may be right. But when he tells us, that this Choice of them was owing to his previous Delight in them, I presume requires more Proof than what he has quoted from *Deut. x. 15. The Lord had a Delight in thy Fathers to love them; and he chose their Seed after them, even you above all People, as at this Day.* I would willingly know what our Author can see in this Text, to answer his Purpose. Is he able to prove that the Fathers of this People were Enemies to God, when the Lord delighted in them? For it is not said, that the Lord delighted in this People, and therefore he chose them; but that he delighted in their Fathers to love them, and he chose their Seed after them; (and this doubtless he did as a Token of his Love to them) which probably is the Meaning of that Scripture, *Rom. xi. 28. As concerning the Gospel, they are Enemies for your sake; but as touching the Election, they are beloved for the Fathers sakes.* But if it can be proved, that *Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, &c.* were delighted in while in Unbelief, or Enemies to God; or that because God delighted in them when Believers, and obedient Children, that therefore he delighted

delighted in their Seed when in Disobedience and Unbelief: then may the Men of the *Superlapsarian* Scheme urge this Choice of the People of *Israel*, as an Argument for their Cause, or otherwise it will afford it no Relief.

It is farther affirmed by this Author, that *all the Favours and Blessings which God bestows on his People in time, arise from his Delight in them: As his bringing them out of Darkness into Light, out of a State of Nature into a State of Grace, out of Distress and Difficulties of every kind; spring from his Delight in them.* For the Proof of which, he quotes *Psal. xviii. 19. He brought me forth also into a large Place; he delivered me, because he delighted in me.* This Text indeed proves that the Lord delivered his Servant *David* from his great and strong Enemies, because he delighted in him; but it is far from proving what this Author designed, *viz.* that God delighted in *David*, or any of the Children of Men, whilst in Unbelief or Disobedience. *David* was indeed a Favourite of Heaven, a Man after God's own Heart; and this Text is Part of the Song which he composed to celebrate the Praise of God his Saviour for the manifold Deliverances which he had wrought for him, in saving him from the cruel Designs of his great Enemies; as is plain in the two preceding Verses. And the Title of the *Psalms* also informs us, that *David* spake unto the Lord the Words of this Song in the Day that the Lord delivered him from the Hand of all his Enemies, and from the Hand of *Saul*. Is this then any help to this Gentleman's insupportable Proposition? What, because the Lord delivered *David*, a Man of Faith and Prayer, when in imminent Danger, and enlarged his Liberty, so that his Enemies could not touch him, to shew that he delighted in him; does this prove that God converts ungodly Sinners, because he delighted in
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them before their Conversion? If he had said, that the opening of blind Eyes, and softening hard Hearts, and bowing the proud Mind, to submit to God in the Method of his Grace, was the blessed Effects of infinite Compassion and Goodness, I know not who would have opposed it. But I perceive some Men will rather adventure to misapply the sacred Scripture, than their admired Notion, of God's taking Pleasure in rebellious Sinners, shall appear without a Foundation. I do not doubt but God's bringing poor Sinners out of the wretched State of Sin and Nature, into a State of Grace, is the Effect of his great Love, and in order to render them delightful in his Eyes; but that he took delight in them before this change was made, is an unscriptural and unreasonable Doctrine. And our Author must see (if Prejudice does not veil his Understanding) that he has but a very slender Foundation for his Opinion, or else he would not have forced the Divine Word so often as he has done; nay, he has produced a Multitude of Scriptures to plead his Doctrine, which cannot be mentioned as Supports thereof, without an evident Violation of them. There are several Texts grossly misapplied in the same Page, in order to support his following Conclusion from the Premises, in the following Words: *In a Word* (says he) *the whole Salvation of the Elect is owing to God's Love of Delight, with which he loves them*; and then produceth the following Scriptures to maintain it: Psal. cxlix. 4. *The Lord taketh Pleasure in his People; he will beautify the Meek with Salvation.* Jer. xxxii. 41. *I will rejoice over them to do them good.* Zeph. iii. 17. *He will save, he will rejoice over thee with Joy: He will rest in his Love, he will joy over thee with Singing.* Now if our Author does not design these Scriptures to support his O-

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pinion of God's delighting in the Elect before their Conversion ; then there is nothing designed in his Conclusion that concerns the Dispute : But if he proposed hereby to confirm what he has all along been pleading for, then it is evident to a weak Capacity, that he has greatly perverted these Scriptures ; for I will adventure to say, that they cannot in any wise serve to establish his Doctrine. But these Scriptures are designed to encourage the Hope, and strengthen the Faith of the believing Part of Mankind, as the People of God. Besides, we no where read, that Unbelievers are called the Meek of the Earth, which the Lord taketh Pleasure in, and will beautify with Salvation. Certainly then this Author has greatly misapplied this Text ; since in the 3d Verse of this *Psalm* they are called the Children of *Zion*, and in the 5th *Verse* they are styled Saints : So that he might with as good Reason have quoted *Psal.* cxlvii. 11. as a Proof of this Doctrine ; *The Lord taketh Pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his Mercy* ; as the Text which he hath quoted above. And for what Reason he has cited *Jer.* xxxii. 41. and *Zeph.* iii. 17. is best known to himself ; for I am persuaded that they stand remote from his Doctrine, and cannot be construed to give countenance to it. It is Matter of Wonder to me, that Men should be so byassed to an Opinion, as to force the sacred Scripture, rather than yield to be guided by the pure Meaning and shining Light of it. If our Author has cited these Scriptures to support his Doctrine, then has he most egregiously abused them ; but if this was not his Design, then does he as remarkably trifle with his Readers, who take it for granted that these Texts are produced to maintain his former Proposition, of God's delighting in the Elect while in their rebellious

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lions State. It may therefore be convenient for me to make a short Remark upon them, to shew that they cannot intend any such Thing. That Text in *Jer. xxxii. 41.* is a gracious Promise to a converted People, as is plain from the two foregoing *Verses*, which read thus ; *And I will give them one Heart, and one Way, that they may fear me for ever, for the Good of them, and of their Children after them. And I will make an everlasting Covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good ; but I will put my Fear in their Hearts, that they shall not depart from me.* And then follows ; *Yea, I will rejoice over them to do them good.* And that Text in *Zeph. iii. 17.* is, according to my Understanding, a Promise of God's gracious Presence to the *Jews* after their Conversion and Return to their own Land in Gospel-Times ; for the Performance of which I wait with longing Expectation. And that this relates to the happy State of the Church when the *Jews* shall be converted, appears plain from the 7th *Vers*e to the Close of the Chapter ; and that it may be rightly understood by the Reader, I will transcribe the four *Verses* immediately before the Text, which read as follows : *The Remnant of Israel shall not do Iniquity, nor speak Lies ; neither shall a deceitful Tongue be found in their Mouth : for they shall feed and lie down, and none shall make them afraid. Sing, O Daughter of Zion, shout, O Israel, be glad and rejoice with all the Heart, O Daughter of Jerusalem. The Lord hath taken away thy Judgments (or Punishments) he hath cast out thine Enemy. The King of Israel, even the Lord, is in the Midst of thee ; thou shalt not see Evil any more. In that Day it shall be said to Jerusalem, Fear thou not ; and to Zion, Let not thine Hands be slack, (or faint.)* And then fol-

lows the Text: *The Lord thy God in the Midst of thee is mighty ; he will save, he will rejoice over thee with Joy, &c.* If these Scriptures have the least View to God's delighting in any unconverted Sinner, then I cannot see that it is possible for us to know the Meaning of any Scripture-Prophecy, nor how we can judge when the sacred Writings are falsely applied, or justly quoted: For if these Texts, which mention God's taking Pleasure in a converted People, in whose Heart is his Law, &c. will serve to prove his Delight in them before Conversion, where must we apply for a Rule of judging what is Truth, or what is Error? And what will be the Consequence of thus wresting the Holy Scripture, but to render it subservient to all Kinds of Doctrine, and make it speak whatsoever the Author pleases; which is the direct Method to destroy it, as to a Rule of Judgment, and thereby open a wide Door for all Errors to make their farther Advances upon pure revealed Religion.

I SHALL now return to make some Remarks upon what our Author has said in Banter, which he has intermix'd with supposed strong Arguments against the Opposers of his admired Notion of God's delighting in the Elect before Conversion. In Page 53. he is pleased to tell us, That the Distinction which is made of God's loving the Elect while in their unregenerate State, with a Love of Pity and Benevolence only, but not with a Love of Delight and Complacency, *is an idle and ill-grounded Distinction of some ignorant, trifling Popish Schoolmen, which our grave Divines have been fond of, and have used, when they thought it would serve their Purpose, tho' it is subversive of the very Nature and Perfections of God.* If this Gentleman can prove this high Charge upon the Doctrine which he so gravely banters, then probably he

he may be allowed to continue the Ridicule with a good Grace ; but otherwise it may very likely return with double Weight upon his own Notion, as what manifestly opposes the sacred Scripture. I will frankly acknowledge, that I have no high Opinion of Popish Doctrines, and I am apt to believe, that there is very few of that pretended Church of Christ are so remote from the grossest Tenets of *Arminianism*, as to allow what this Author tells us came first from them. But if any of that Communion do espouse this Doctrine, at which he is so greatly disturbed ; yet I shall not very willingly part with it, because some Men of very corrupt Opinions in other respects do believe it. Neither shall I scruple to say, that if this Distinction was first made by these Schoolmen, that nevertheless I do believe it stands nearer to the Doctrine of the Scripture than his Opinion does, and will bear the Test of Scripture and Reason too, when his Notion of God's delighting in some Men while ungodly Sinners, will fall before the Light of both.

BUT I proceed now to consider the grand Argument which this Author has levelled against this Doctrine, in order to prove that it is subversive of the Nature and Perfections of God, in the following Words ; *It represents him (viz. God) as altogether such a one as ourselves, subject to change ; that his Love, like ours, alters, and by Degrees increases, and from a Love of Pity and Benevolence, passes into a Love of Complacency and Delight, &c.* But I hope that this Gentleman will spare to censure on this Head, when he has truly weighed the Import of his own Doctrine in Page 62. where he is pleased to tell us, *That Jesus Christ standing in two different Relations, and sustaining two different Capacities, was at one and the*

the same Time the Object of his Father's Love and Wrath. As he was the Son of God, he was always the Object of his Love and Delight; but as he was the Sinner's Surety, and while bearing the Sins of his People in his own Body on the Tree, he was the Object of his Displeasure and Wrath, which he sensibly felt, and therefore said, Thou hast cast off and abhorred; thou hast been wrath with thine Anointed; Psal. lxxxix. 8.

Now either this Author must deny that God delighted in Christ Jesus as the Sinner's Surety, from his first Engagements to that Office, until he had paid the infinite Debt which he had contracted to pay; or else, according to his own Notion, this Argument of his will appear more liable to be charged with subverting the Nature and Perfections of God, than the Doctrine which he has so censured. For hereby God is supposed to withdraw his Love of Delight from Christ as our Surety, while he was paying the Debt for us; since our Author says, that then *he was the Object of the Father's Displeasure and Wrath*. So that here is a Change from Delight to the greatest Displeasure. And unless he disowns that Christ is admitted since he paid the Debt to the Father's Delight again, (which I am persuaded he will not) then the Complacency and Delight, has reverted back to its former infinite Degree. Here then is one Change after another in this admired Argument, which is advanced with Design to guard against a supposed Evil; but instead of removing the Difficulty, it adds greatly thereto, and, according to this Author's Opinion, must render it insuperable. Certainly it concerns a Writer of Disputes, to examine well his own Opinion, and be well satisfied that it is invulnerable in that Point which he designs to wound the contrary Opinion in, before he makes his

his severe Attack upon it. If this Writer had taken due Care herein, I persuade myself that he would not have censured the Opinion that he has so strenuously opposed in this Point. But farther; I judge that it is not impossible but what this Gentleman is pleased to esteem the Subversion of God's Unchangeableness, may prove the Establishment of that divine Perfection, as agreeing to the time which the Almighty in his eternal Purpose had fixed to take Delight in his Chosen, *viz.* when united to his Son, and adorned by his Spirit with Grace. And this seems to be the intent of their being elected through Sanctification of the Spirit; chosen in Christ, that they might be holy; and that they were predestinated to be conformed to the Image of his Son. This is the Language of the Holy Scripture, which points out to us, that God requires this Purity and Conformity, in order to render them his Delight. And I do not think it any Presumption to say, that the Almighty never purposed to delight in any ungodly rebellious Sinners, neither will his Holy Nature admit of it. But our Author has all along been building his Doctrine of God's delighting in the Elect while ungodly, upon a Foundation equally as false and ridiculous as this is; in supposing that they were united to Christ in Eternity, and from thence he argues in *Page 57.* that it could not be otherwise than that God should delight in them while in Unbelief, since they were always in Christ as their Head. But if they were not united to Christ while in their ungodly State; then our Author's Foundation, for God's eternal Delight in them, is eternally lost, yea, and his Ground for censuring the opposite Doctrine is lost too; since this Doctrine fixes the time for God's Delight in them, where the Purpose of God seems to fix it, *viz.* when they bear the delightful Image of

of Christ, or when they are united to him, which is not till they believe, as hath been already proved by almost innumerable Scriptures and Arguments.

IN *Page 55.* our Author quotes *Aristotle*, and informs his Reader that this Philosopher tells him, that Benevolence is properly neither Friendship nor Love; and that no Man can be said to love, who is not first delighted with the Form or Idea of the Object. But is there no Reason to object against the Opinion of this Philosopher? Does not our own Experience teach the reverse? I would ask this Gentleman, if he never saw an Object whose miserable State engaged his Compassion, and disposed him to shew Friendship, by affording some Relief to the miserable Creature, though there was no delightful Form in the Object, nor any thing but Misery to engage his Kindness? What, is not that Love which disposes one Man to relieve another in Misery and Necessity? I admire how any Man can stand against the Force of Reason and Experience in this plain Point, wherein all Men of common Humanity must be as good Judges in this Affair, as our Author's Philosopher was. But he, to vindicate what this Heathen Philosopher has wrote, tells us, *that indeed he cannot see that to be Love, which is without any Delight in the Object*; and attempts to support this Unbelief with two extraordinary Comparisons, as follow: *If a Man should say to his Wife, I love you well, I wish you well, and am willing to do you all the good Offices I am able, but at the same time I can take no Delight in your Person, nor Pleasure in your Company; would not this be esteemed a Contradiction to his Expressions of Love to her? So if a Father should say to his Child, I wish you well, I pity you in what you do amiss, and I design to do something for you, which may be for your good, but I can take no De-*
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light and Pleasure in you as a Child of mine ; what kind of Love would this be thought to be ? Answer ; Why probably a Love of Compassion and Benevolence : And as things may be circumstanced, will be great Love too ; and I am of Opinion, as great Love as any Man in the World is able to exercise, which some good Men, good Husbands, and good Fathers, have known to their Sorrow. But I desire that neither this Gentleman, nor myself may ever by Experience know what it is to have our Enemies those of our own House. But though we have not the sad Tryal of wicked and rebellious Relations ; yet certainly we may easily conceive that a religious Man, who has a Wife that hates him, and companies with lewd Men, and by all her Behaviour shews that she loves others better than her Husband, and this he is made sensible of from her Carriage and Confession both ; I desire any Man of Reason to consider whether its possible for him to delight in her, or take pleasure in her Company. Pity and pray for her he may, and do good to her, though she is wicked and false to him ; but to delight in her as his Wife, he cannot : And I am persuaded, that no sensible Man, who is not byassed by Prepossession, can admit it. And so likewise may the Case be circumstanced in reference to a Child, that the tender Parent cannot delight in him. How many Children have arrived to such a Degree of Wickedness, as to contemn God and their Parents ? How many good Parents have had profligate Children, who instead of being the Delight of their Parents, have been their continual Sorrow ? Whose vile Actions have filled them with inexpressible Grief and Shame ? So that though they pitied them, and prayed for them, and wished their Welfare both of Soul and Body ; yet could not take pleasure in their Company, &c.

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Thus the sorrowful Experience of many religious Parents, as well as others, does evidently disapprove the Opinion of this Gentleman and his Philosopher. But what I esteem the strongest Evidence against the Notion of these Authors, is the Language of the Son of God, whose Advice to his Followers is, *That they should love their Enemies, bless those that curse them, do good to such as hate them, and pray for those that despitefully use them, and that persecute them; Mat. v. 44.* Now I will return this Author's Question unto himself. What sort of Love does he think this to be? Sure he cannot once imagine that this is a Love of Complacency and Delight; for I judge it will be a very difficult task, to prove that any Man can delight in the Company of such as they know to be their Enemies, and that use them with envious and malicious Language, and persecute them with Rage and Spite. Where is any Record that informs us of a Man's delighting in his known Enemies? or, that its our Duty to love them with this sort of Love? Therefore this Love which our Lord does in this Text exhort us to, cannot be any Degree above a Love of Pity and Benevolence; in pitying them as in a State of spiritual Blindness, Hardness of Heart, as Enemies to God, in a dismal and dangerous Condition, as they are running in the broad Way of Sin, and thereby risking their own eternal Salvation. So likewise we have the Love of Benevolence, in a very evident Manner expressed in the Text which exhorts us to do good unto our Enemies, and to pray for them. If this is not the Love of Benevolence, I know not what the Love of Benevolence is; for here is doing good to them, and wishing well to them, or else the Prayer is deceitful, and not fit to be called Prayer, but a mere Mocking the Almighty. The Philosopher then

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was egregiously mistaken, when he tells us, that Benevolence is neither Friendship nor Love. But farther: I can't help observing how undesignedly our Author has wounded his fond Notion of God's delighting in some Men while ungodly, by his wonderful Comparisons, which were probably designed to shew that his Sentiments are all of a Piece, and nicely consistent with each other, since the Comparisons are made between Persons in the nearest Relation, as Husband and Wife, Father and Child; probably to suggest to us his firm Belief of God's owning the Elect, while in their Rebellions, as the Spouse of Christ, and his beloved Children; which I have already proved false and ridiculous: and what he has said in the Conclusion of his first Comparison, proves his Opinion, of God's delighting in some unconverted Sinners, to be false too. And that this is apparently included therein, will be seen by reading that Comparison, *viz. If a Man should say to his Wife, I love you well, and am willing to do you all the good Offices I am able, but, at the same time, I can take no delight in your Persons, nor Pleasure in your Company; would not this be esteemed a Contradiction to his Expressions of Love to her?* I have already shewn that the Case may be so circumstanced, that it is no Contradiction to such Expressions of Love. But if this Gentleman does esteem it so, why does he plead for God's delighting in the Elect, in their sinful and rebellious State? and yet must acknowledge, that he does not take Pleasure in their Company, nor vouchsafe to dwell with them. Nothing sure can be plainer, than that God is pleased to dwell with them in whom he delights: So that unless this Gentleman will undertake to advance and maintain another novel Doctrine, *viz. That the Holy Majesty of Heaven does dwell with, and take Pleasure*

sure in, the Company of these Enemies of his, his Doctrine must fall before the undesigned Light of his own Argument.

T H U S I have gone as far as I at first designed, in examining the *Superlapsarian* Doctrines; and have endeavoured to confute them by Scripture and Argument. Whether the Performance has answered the Design which I proposed hereby, I shall leave to the Judgment of all impartial Readers.

A N D now, for a Conclusion, I do beseech and earnestly intreat the Authors and Preachers of these Doctrines, that they will take special care lest they should misapply the Holy Scripture; and also that they would be exceeding cautious of fixing their Opinions upon the Leadings of the Holy Spirit, by pretending that he is the Author of them; lest hereby they should make themselves highly culpable, and grieve the Holy Spirit, by calling him the Author of their great Mistakes. It must certainly be an high Affront to the Blessed Spirit of all Truth, to be represented as the Patron of false Notions: And if all Men was careful on this Account, I should hope to see more Unity among true Christians, and a more just Regard paid to Divine Truth, and more of the Zeal, Power and Spirituality of Religion; but while Men will adventure to fix their airy and chimerical Notions upon the Leadings of the Divine Spirit, no wonder if he should be provoked thereby, and withdraw from the Churches, as is to the Grief of many experienced in this Day of abounding Errors and Sin. Conversion-Work is almost stop'd; and how should it be otherwise, when converting Doctrines are laid aside, and the Preachers are leading the People after their own fond Conceits, and every Text must be strained to speak their imaginary eternal Truths, which has nothing to support it but strained Comments,
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and a flaming Zeal, which often carries them beyond the Bounds of Christian Charity and Moderation? But if they would carefully attend to the Preaching which was used by Christ Jesus and his Apostles, in order to shew the Necessity of Repentance and Faith, and the Danger of Impenitency and Unbelief; I should hope to see more Charity among Christians, and a greater Success of the Word upon the Souls of Sinners. I have been often afflicted, to hear some Ministers in their preaching use all the Arguments possible to inform poor Sinners that they can't repent; which I judge is a wrong Method, and what does not become their Ministry, who are obliged to exhort Sinners to repent in Christ's Name; *Luke xxiv. 47.* But I never yet heard any thing in their Preaching that tended this Way; but rather to inform them what they can't do, and what they shall do if elected, not what they must do or perish. But, to my Grief and Surprize, I have heard a learned Preacher in a crowded Assembly say, *Every elect Sinner here shall be called; God will call you all.* Now is this agreeable to what that Scripture says; *Heb. iii. 7, 15. To Day if you will hear his Voice, harden not your Hearts.* No certainly; for this sort of Preaching rather informs Sinners that to-morrow may do as well, and that they need not be solicitous about Repentance and their Soul's Conversion; for God will call them in his own time. But probably I may be accosted here in the Language of the learned Author before quoted, in *Page 89.* That this is legal Repentance, and therefore is not to be valued and regarded, and to exhort *to this kind of Repentance is low and mean Stuff; too mean for, below, and unworthy of a Minister of the Gospel.* I am sorry to find this Author so positive on this Point; for I am afraid that hereby he reflects

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reflects greatly upon the Preaching of *John the Baptist*, and also upon the excellent Preachings of *Jesus Christ* and his Apostles, who pressed their Hearers to Repentance, by exhibiting the Terrors of God's righteous Judgments against such as refused to hear and receive their Words. Thus preached *John the Baptist*, Mat. iii. 10. *And now also the Ax is laid unto the Root of the Trees; therefore every Tree which bringeth not forth good Fruit, is hewn down, and cast into the Fire.* Thus also preached our Blessed Saviour, in Luke xiii. 3, 5. *I tell you, nay: But except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.* And thus preached the Apostles of our Lord; 2 Cor. v. 11. *Knowing therefore the Terror of the Lord, we persuade Men.* Now if I should ask the Men of this Scheme, whether the preaching of these Terrors is a likely Method to produce evangelical Repentance or not; I am apt to believe that they will readily answer, No. Then certainly the Preaching of Christ and his Apostles was designed to beget in their Hearers, in the first Place, a Sense of their wretched sinful State, and that they have by their great Sins and Transgressions exposed themselves to the just Displeasure and Wrath of God, by great and frequent Sins against his holy and righteous Law, which condemns them as the Violaters thereof. And this I imagine will not be allowed any more than legal Repentance, which is effected through preaching the Terrors of the Lord, against the Violaters of his holy and righteous Law. I would therefore ask them, if this was not the first Effect which the Preachers of the Word had upon their own Souls? and whether they were not brought to see their lost State and Condition hereby, as actual Transgressors against God's Commands, and therefore deserving of his hot Displeasure? and that when
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their Souls were distress'd by the Knowledge of their Guilt and undone Condition, if the preaching of the Word by the same Minister was not made as healing Balm to their wounded Souls, when Christ was preaching as an able and compassionate Saviour, and that he died to redeem them from under the Curse of God's holy Law, which censures all Transgressors, and that he has procured Pardon for them by his Blood, and that he will heal the broken in Heart, and bind up their Wounds; that they are such as the Word describes to be under his gracious Regard, whom he pities, and compassionately invites to his Arms of Grace and Mercy (*Mat. xi. 28.*) where their burdened Souls shall find sweet and speedy rest, &c. And now I judge is the time when the greater Degree of Repentance is produced in the Soul, when from the believing Views of the dying Love of Christ, and the free and gracious Pardon of God through the Blessed Redeemer's Blood, the Soul is melted into Tears of Joy at the surprizing Grace of God, in pardoning his great and numerous Sins, and the most endearing Love of Jesus, in dying for him. And now Joy and Sorrow seem to work together in the Soul: Joy, that God has pardoned through the peace-making Blood of Jesus; and a real hearty Sorrow, that he should sin against so gracious and merciful a God, and wound so dear a Redeemer, by his Unbelief and actual Sins, which he now looks upon as the Cause of the painful Sufferings of his Saviour, and therefore mourns over them, hates them, and seeks and prays for their Destruction, &c.

Now therefore I will appeal to the Consciences of these Men, if the first Use of the Word preached was not the Discovery of their lost State, as actual Transgressors against the holy Law of God? And if this was the Method God was pleased to take

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take with them, and is also agreeable to the Effect which the Word had in all the several Ages of Christianity, why must those Ministers that press the Necessity of Repentance from the dangerous State that unconverted Sinners are in, only as the first Use of the Gospel, be represented and censured as unsound and legal Preachers ; since they have the Example of Christ and his Apostles in this great Work, as well as the Experience of Christians of all Ages ? What Reason can be assigned, to shew that Sinners are grown so soft and tender now, that the melting Language of the Gospel is most likely to impress their Minds ? Is their Stubbornness less now than in former Ages of the World ? Are the unconverted Part of Mankind grown so ingenuous, that Mercy and Grace does now work kindly upon them ? O, no, I fear not ! I am afraid Sinners are as hard-hearted and inflexible now as from the Beginning ; and that there is as much Reason to make use of the Word as an Hammer to break their stubborn Hearts, as in any Age of the World. And I am ready to believe, that in all Ages of Time, legal Repentance did precede what we call evangelical Repentance ; and that God in infinite Wisdom does require it, as necessary to Forgiveness, in all capable Beings. And I conceit, that unanswerable Arguments may be advanced, to prove that legal Repentance must be wrought in the Soul, in order to Faith and evangelical Repentance, which I esteem a Fruit of Faith. And if I should be called upon to shew my Reasons for it, I purpose to prove, that it is agreeable to the whole Tenor of the Gospel, and may be defended even from the Conversion of *Paul*, the Thief on the Cross, and the Goaler, whose Conversions were the most sudden of any instanced in the Scripture, and therefore will
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tend to strengthen the Proof of such sort of Preaching as I am contending for, and which Christ Jesus and his Apostles used. And yet I am far from believing, that these sudden Conversions, or any real Conversion of Souls, is effected by the Power or Will of Man; or by any Power short of the infinite Power of God, which only can produce this saving and spiritual Change. And therefore I conclude, that the Repentance which Mr. *Gill* allows Sinners may be exhorted to, stands more remote from the Power of the Creature, than the Repentance which he will not admit an Exhortation to, but calls it low and mean Stuff. But as mean and low as he, and others of his Opinion, are pleased to esteem it, it appears evident from the Scriptures above cited, as well as many other Parts of Scripture, that our blessed Lord and his Disciples did not esteem it unworthy of their Ministry. And therefore I shall adventure to give this as my Opinion concerning Preaching, *viz.* That unless such as are employed in that great and important Work of preaching the Gospel, do exhort Sinners to repent, and press the Necessity of it from the Consideration of their dangerous State, as Transgressors of the holy and righteous Law of God, and the Necessity of Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as the atoning Sacrifice; that they cannot justly say, that they are clean from the Blood of all Men, or that they have declared the Counsel of God, but have for the sake of their own unscriptural Notions wittingly shunned it. For this is his Counsel or Advice, that Repentance and Remission of Sins should be preached in Christ's Name among all Nations, which Doctrine was to begin at *Jerusalem*; *Luke* xxiv. 47. Accordingly the Apostles, in obedience to this Commission, did begin this Doctrine at

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Jerusalem, and afterwards preached it in many Nations remote from thence, which was blessed to the Conversion of great Multitudes. And if the Ministers of this Day will alter the Texture of this Gospel, and neglect to preach and testify the Necessity of Repentance towards God, and Faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ, (without encouraging their Neglect herein, by telling them, that if they are elected, they shall repent and believe) I am greatly afraid that such Neglects will be at their Peril.

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